

Revealed Religion Asserted ;

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS

TO THE

Rev. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S.

CONTAINING (MORE ESPECIALLY)

SOME ANIMADVERSIONS ON THE DOCTOR'S
OPINION

Of ETERNAL PUNISH- MENT, Of the DOCTRINE of CAL- VIN,	Of the NATURE of GOD and the HUMAN SOUL, And of the ATONEMENT of CHRIST.
--	---

By SAMUEL ROWLES.

Thou hast magnified thy WORD above all thy Name.

DAVID.

To the *Law* and to the *Testimony* : if they speak not according
to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.

ISAIAH.

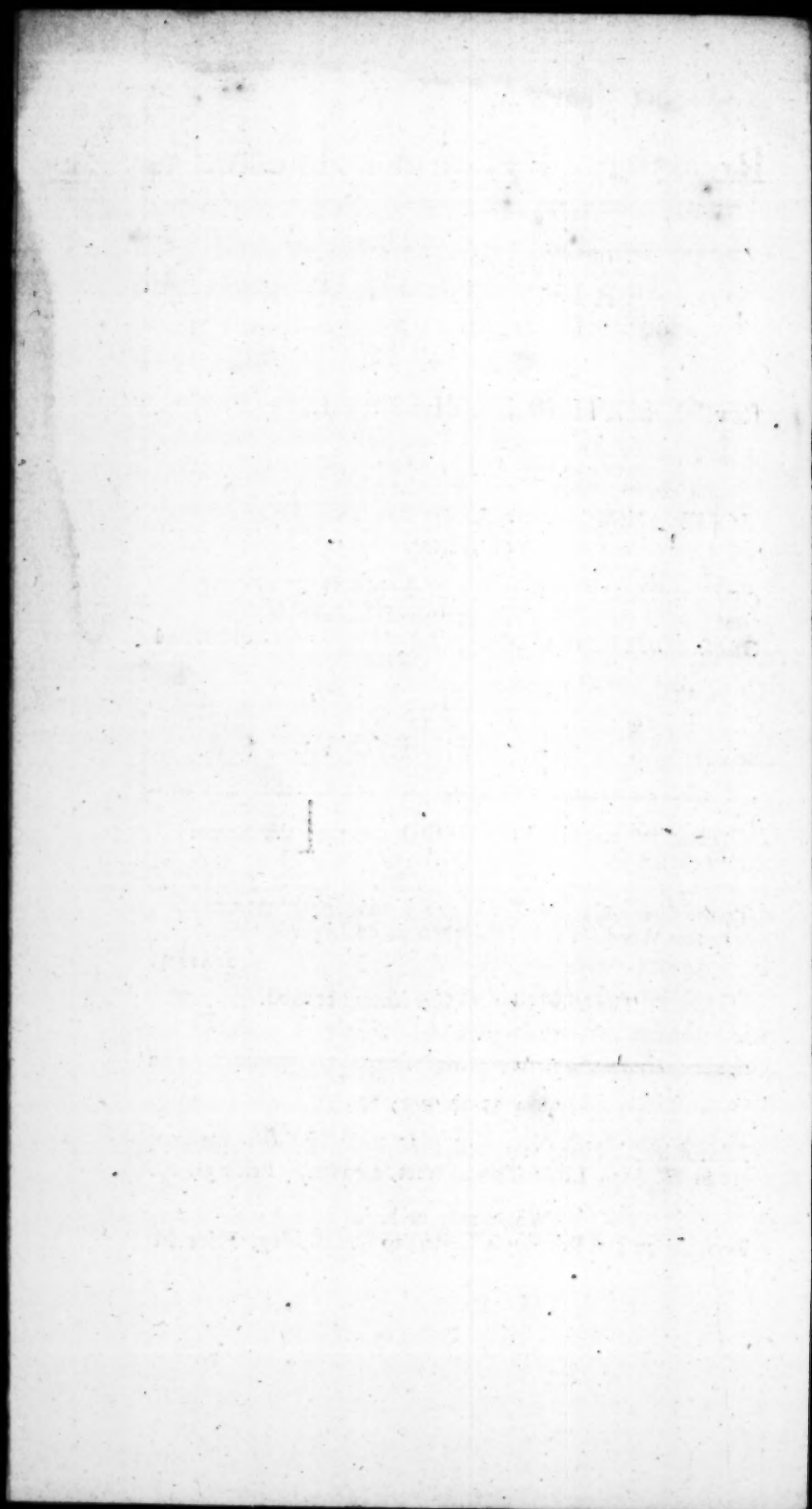
The World by *Wisdom* knew not God.

PAUL.

T A U N T O N :

Printed by T. NORRIS : and Sold by A. BROWN, Bristol,
and W. ASH, Little Tower-street, London. Price 3s. 6d.

Where may be had,
Remarks on Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Horsley. Price 6d.



P R E F A C E.

THE preface to a book is a bar erected by custom, at which the author is expected to appear and give some account of his undertaking. But, it is a bar of *liberty*—he may say more or less, but *enough* is sufficient. He may tell you what he was once, what he is now, and what he intends to be in future, and so on—but, as there is no *obligation* to say all this, and, as the public are not interested in it, I must beg to be excused from such an useless task.

Entertainment seems, at present, to be the grand object of readers in general. But entertainment, without improvement being designed, is a waste of time; and discovers a dissipated taste. And there is no improvement so worthy the pursuit of a rational creature, and so suited to his eternal welfare, as the knowledge of divine truth. That truth is nowhere made known but in the sacred page; nor is its sweetness ever experienced but under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We seem to glory in being more enlightened and more catholic than our ancestors—but, is it not matter of deep lamentation that, with our

advance of knowledge, we should lose our reverence of God, and zeal for the truth of christianity! Can a period be named in which dissipation of manners more prevailed than this? And, it ought to be remembered that dissipated conduct is the natural and necessary effect of dissipated principles. In this light I consider the principles advanced by Dr. *Priestley*—with this in view I undertook to point out their fallacy and danger, and to supply the reader with others more deserving his notice. I know the sentiments advanced and defended, in these letters, are much out of fashion and deemed unpolite—for this reason, had I not been convinced of their truth and importance from the highest authority, I had not undertaken the present business. The day will soon open on the world, in the light of which we shall see which is most approved by the Judge—an humble attachment to them, or a candid indifference about them.

Some will observe to you—‘that it is no matter what your creed may be, if your life be good.’ But this is a manifest deception—because, a good life cannot flow from bad principles; and because, ‘As a man *thinketh* so is he.’ The humbling doctrines of revelation are very unacceptable to those gentlemen who, by way of distinction, affect to be called *rational christians*!—as though they possessed the monopoly of *reason*. With a view to
 establish

establish that character the doctrine of materialism is introduced ; which, were it true, would doubtless prove effectual—but the wretched fallacy of it is pointed out in the philosophical part of this work. It was needful to do so. For, however there may be a professed regard to religion and virtue, it is impossible to prove that matter can be the subject of either virtue or vice, of praise or blame, of pain or pleasure. I hope therefore to be excused by those readers to whom that part of the subject may be rather unpleasant.

Real religion is considered by some as an insult on our understanding, and a reproach to our good sense and taste ; and therefore it is very candidly transferred to a few ignorant enthusiasts.—The cause of it is manifest. But those to whom the Lord displays his infinite glories in the person and salvation of Christ, are better taught.—They are taught by the Holy Spirit of truth, and rejoice alone in the triumph of truth—that truth which stands confessed, and is magnified, in the salvation of sinners. It is probable that the contents of these papers will be called mere *speculation* ; and, as such, thrown aside—but, I would beg leave to observe that, in religion, there is no such thing as speculation, or *indifference of opinion* ; for all men have some sort of creed ; and that creed may be clearly understood by the general bias of the mind and conduct : so
that

that, in fact, there is nothing in true religion but what is of a *practical* tendency. This remark is confirmed by every man's observation. To charge vital godliness with being unfriendly to social life and human happiness, is opposing the plainest evidence in the world ; and is, as the prophet says, '*putting darkness for light, and light for darkness.*' But, the truth is, those who are most under the influence of real religion, *the love of God shed abroad in the heart*, are the best members of society, and the most happy people upon earth ; let their external circumstances be as they may.

The object of this undertaking deserves a better defence than I can possibly make—but, if my feeble effort may stimulate some abler pen, I shall rejoice—and, if this essay should prove a blessing to any reader, the praise shall be given to the fountain of every good and perfect gift. No doubt but inaccuracies will be discerned in this performance—the reader, however, is not requested candidly to overlook them, but in a friendly manner to point them out, that they may be corrected. Nor do I make any apology for the principles maintained—for, if they be the truths of God, they need none ; and, if they be not, I will most cheerfully renounce them on conviction. I dare not deliver any thing, from the pulpit or the press, as the ground of hope to my fellow-sinners, but what the Lord reveals in his word—

word—and there I most evidently learn, ‘ *that*
‘ *all who are saved, are saved as SINNERS;*
‘ *not as GOOD, but as GUILTY, not as WORTHY,*
‘ *but as WEAK and WRETCHED; that the*
‘ *exceeding riches of the grace of God may have*
‘ *all the glory.*’

The reader is most affectionately requested maturely to reflect on the design of these letters, and the interesting nature of those truths which are pleaded in them; and, in his doing so, may the blessing of the eternal Spirit rest on him, and on what he reads. Amen.

S. R.

Chard, Nov. 18th, 1786.

Note I. The author is truly sorry for the delay of this publication: but it arose from the late arrival of subscriptions, and other circumstances, which he could not prevent.

II. Where the letter R. is found, with a number annexed, as in page 22, it is a reference to *Remarks* on Dr. Priestley’s Letters to Dr. Horsley.

III. By Vol. III. *Disquisitions* is designed the *Epistolary Correspondence* between Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price.

IV. The publication of these letters being the object which the subscribers had in view, and, as the work exceeds the author’s intention; they are respectfully requested to excuse the omission of their names.



Revealed Religion Asserted, &c.

LETTER I.

REVEREND SIR,

WHEN I published my *Remarks* on your Letters to Dr. Horsley, I had not read any other of your works. But since that time I have perused your three volumes of *Disquisitions*—and, had I seen them sooner, those *Remarks*, or these Letters, had been suppressed.

While I diligently attended to the contents of these volumes, I was careful not to forget that I had a full *right* to examine the evidence produced in defence of your system. I am pleased that you reject the doctrine of implicit faith—for that reason you are the more at liberty to hear what may be offered for not acceding either to your philosophy, or your divinity. Were I called to consider only your philosophical *experiments*, I could give you credit if I had not trodden your steps; but, seeing you apply your philosophy to the doctrines of christianity, I am obliged to enter a caveat.

Not that I have the vanity to suppose myself your equal in the walks of natural science—very few, in my opinion, are so. I am sensible my knowledge is comparatively very small. However, if I know more than the beasts of the field, or the fowls of heaven; Job xxxv. 11. and, especially, if I have any saving knowledge of the gospel of Christ which once I had not; *all* the difference is made by the sovereign hand of heaven: of course it is but a just tribute of gratitude to employ the whole to the glory of the giver. I have not the most distant wish to shade your abilities. Nor do I question your integrity. I owe every office of kindness to your *person*, with the most ardent wishes for your eternal welfare; but I dare not say this of your *principles*. No, sir; principles and persons, you know, are very different objects. These ought to be treated as objects of compassion and charity; but those,

B

at

at times, of indignation and contempt. Nor can you, as a *necessarian*, be displeased with my dissent from you; while things appear to my mind in the present light. My views of the subject are as *necessary* as yours. I rejoice, with you, that nothing is left to unmeaning chance; but that every event takes place according to the plan laid out by the eternal mind, and a regular connection of cause and effect.

In the proceeding of my address, I design to be free without fury, and plain without being pert; and, if I depart from my rule, I shall be open to your rebuke. I think it will appear that you have asserted without evidence, and concluded without premises; and that, for this reason, your scheme and revelation cannot stand together.

Your general view of controversy nearly meets mine. For, if men contend for *personal* conquest and triumph, and not the promotion of *truth*, it is neither pleasing nor profitable. Notwithstanding, were there to be writers only on *one* side of a question, ignorance and error would soon predominate more than they do already; because the prevailing propensity of human nature, in its fallen state, is in favour of error and not of truth. Where one person has the same *right* to examine a question, which another has to propose one; I cannot conjecture why his candor and philanthropy should be suspected, perhaps denied, for using that right; unless it be, as I said, that human propensity is more inclined to error than truth.

Much is said, I know, in favor of *candor* and *charity*. Were these terms merely two sounds, or, were they properly understood and applied; that is, were *persons* and not *things* their only objects; they might do some good: but, as far as I have observed their influence, in their *present* use, they have been productive of important injury. They relax the attachment of the mind to truth—I mean *revealed truth*.—It may be they were designed to do so. They naturally lead the man to look on error with a favourable countenance; then embrace it; and, if not prevented, will terminate in downright scepticism: to say no more. If I may be *equally* a good man, and my eternal state be *equally* safe, whether I believe this, or that, or neither; it is impossible to prove, I should imagine, that any doctrine, or system of religion, can be true. Will it not follow that every thing is truth, which I may happen to believe is so? If there be certain criteria, or distinguishing marks, of revealed truth; and if these criteria are before us; it cannot be uncandid or uncharitable, I apprehend, to investigate

investigate them closely : nor can it be deemed bigotry, with any tolerable face, to adhere to their evidence with firmness. But, if there be no such truth in being, we are in a far worse state than pagans, because we have always been taught to believe that the bible contains it.

I am very far, no one further, from wishing *civil* coercion to propagate divine truth. To cut a man's throat, to imprison his person, confiscate his property, or asperse his character, in order to convince him he is wrong, or because I think and can prove that he is wrong, is as destitute of common sense as it is of religion. These are the arms of error, not of truth. And, yet, I am equally far from being a disciple of that candor, which renders truth indifferent, and abates the fervor of a cordial attachment to it. I should be glad if the question between the famous patrons of liberality and candor, and those of us who are commonly accounted censorious and rigid, were a little better understood. Have *we* a creed? So have *they*. Do *we* believe the truth of what we defend? Do not even *they* the same? Are *we* indifferent about the reception of our creed? No more are *they*. Those who freely censure the supposed bigotry of others, should, *themselves*, be the constant examples of candor. When these catholic gentlemen have no creed of their own, they will not be concerned about others; and then we may agree with, or dissent from them, without control. But not till then. For it is evident that the grand secret all the while is this : 'They wish their opinions to prevail.' I will not say but sometimes a profession of candor may have been devised as a bait for the unwary, and proved successful; but the doctrine thus shoared up could not stand of itself, or such helps had not been needful to support it. The only proper objects of liberality and candor are, in my opinion, the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the salvation of sinners. These apart, all our social virtues will prove, eventually, of little consequence indeed! It is true, if the evidence on which my faith is founded can be overthrown, and my error pointed out, I would thank the man who has friendship enough to be at the trouble to set me right; for I would with affectionately to follow truth whithersoever it may lead: but, there I stop. Truth is uniform in its nature and all its operations; but error is the direct reverse. Besides, is this candor cultivated to diffuse abroad divine truth? The very act defeats its own end. Can you persuade others to believe that which you treat with a degree of indifference is,

nevertheless, highly deserving their warm attachment and close pursuit? Such an attempt one may safely conclude is absurd. Absurd in idea, because it cannot be realized. For which reason this conduct is self-contradictory; and, as such, morally incapable of attaining the end for which it is extolled. If truth be worthy of our best affections, of which there can be no doubt, it can be no injury to our own, nor can it injure the comfort of others, to pay it the regard it deserves: and, therefore, all reflections of uncharitableness, on that account, are light as vanity, and ought to be treated as such. 'We ought to obey God rather than men.' Acts v. 29.

All licentious conduct flows from an erroneous mind. Therefore there is more evil in an erroneous mind than licentious conduct. The fountain must be superior to the streams. An unerring casuist says, 'From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from *within*, and defile the man.' Mark vii. 21—23. Nor can it be safe or wise to depart from such a decision. David tells us that the Lord 'desires truth in the *inward parts*;' Ps. li. 6. and, if we be not the subjects and lovers of truth, in David's sense, it is no great matter what we are besides. Nothing will avail us.

You will recollect, sir, that I said I do not question your *integrity*—But, as it is the part of man to err, I cannot consider human integrity the standard of truth. On that account, if you will allow me to say it, I would wish you *not* to conclude that you are in the truth *merely* because you are conscious of being sincere: for, as Mr. Saurin says, 'People may sincerely deceive themselves.' And you know who said, 'I verily thought with myself, that I *ought* to do many things contrary to the name of JESUS of Nazareth.' Acts xxvi. 9. Now, while it is manifest that he was egregiously deceived, it is no less clear that he was a man of real integrity, as well as bright abilities. Perhaps, second to none, in these respects. I admire integrity, let a man think as he may; but, were it the standard of truth, there would have been no difference between Saul the persecutor and Paul the apostle. There are many amiable things in the life of *Socinus*, for which I give his biographer* credit that he was a man of

* Rev. Joshua Toulmin, Taunton.

integrity;

integrity; but not a single hint can I find from which to conclude that he was not mistaken: my conviction of truth must arise from other evidence than what is commonly called '*goodness of heart*.' In my esteem goodness of heart is infinitely lighter than a feather, when compared with the authority of God in his word. Dr. Owen says, and with him I quite agree, 'However we may please ourselves in our light, knowledge, learning, and *sincerity*; yet, when we have done all, they are not constituted of God to be the *RULE* and *measure* of other men's faith and conversation'—nor even of our own. For, were that the case, amidst the amazing variety, truth and error would be undistinguishable, and the word of God, the ONLY rule of faith and practice, would become of no effect.

I am sorry to find you intimate that, when a man is turned of '*fifty*,' (Letters to Horsley, Pref. p. 10.) he becomes, as it were unsuceptible of the power of truth. You know, sir, the proverb runs thus—'A man is never *too* old to learn, if he be not *too* good to be taught.' But, pray, what should occasion the '*stiffness*' you mention? Does it arise from insensibility, self-confidence, infallibility, or a wish to stop somewhere? However, should the eternal Spirit open the eyes of your understanding, and shew you the glory of gospel truth, as he has graciously done to some who have been *older* than you, this '*stiffness*' would yield, at once, to his divine impressions, and you would rejoice in the power of sovereign grace for ever. May this be your mercy.

In reference to the present business, I would beg leave to adopt your own words to another. 'I am almost ready to despair of my undertaking, when I consider how very fully you seem to be *persuaded in your own mind*.' The language in which you have, upon *some* occasions, expressed this fulness of persuasion is so strong, that I cannot help smiling when I consider on how very weak a foundation this confidence stands, and how very soon, I am willing to hope, it will fall to the ground.' (Disquis. v. ii. p. 201, 2.) True, sir; we 'all claim the advantage of our *own opinions*,' and are '*too apt* to think the system of our adversaries destitute of them;' this 'so much' prevails, 'that we often think it impossible to contemplate' their system 'with any degree of satisfaction, or without sensations of pain and disgust.' (V. iii. Introd. p. 11.) But as this is known to be a mere *prejudice*, we ought totally to discard it; and attend to what may be said *against* as well as *for* our system, at least with cool reflection.

reflection. Your own following concession confirms me in this remark. You say, 'The disposition may be so vitiated by a wrong bias, that the most frivolous reasons shall appear to have the force of demonstration, when a favorite hypothesis is concerned, and arguments in themselves the most perfectly conclusive, shall appear to have no weight at all when urged against it.' (ib. p. 31.) After such a generous and open acknowledgement as this, with what sober and impartial consideration, may I expect your attention even to the weakest part of evidence in the subsequent letters? Let me not be disappointed. I am, &c.

LETTER II.

REVEREND SIR,

I Approve of every proper opposition to the *doctrines* of the church of Rome; for, in general, I think her creed to be as irrational and irreligious as any one can almost possibly be. But, is it right to build with one hand and pull down with the other? Perhaps, it may appear, presently, that you have done so. You speak of the major part of mankind, whom you style '*the vulgar*,' in a manner that hurts my mind:—because, there may be as much natural genius among the followers of the plough, as in those who can talk Latin and Greek—because, a man may be an adept in philosophy, and, at the same time, ignorant of his best interest; an interest in the salvation of God. Experimental philosophy and experimental religion by no means infer each other—and, because, it seems inconsistent with that philanthropy which you would wish us to suppose you possess. The instruction and happiness of our poorest and most illiterate neighbor, *simply considered*, should excite our attention as much as the happiness and instruction of a prince. If the doctrines of your scheme be indeed of SO MUCH importance to the glory of christianity, as you apprehend; they must be of the greatest consequence to the present and future welfare of men; and all ought fully to be informed respecting them. But, is a *papist* expected to give up his conscience to the priest, or the church? Precisely corresponding with this principle, you are pleased to say that, 'A christian has no reason to be

biassed

* biased in favor of the doctrine of a soul, but may without concern leave his having a soul to philosophical discussion.' (ib. p. 19. Introd.) By this, it seems, a man is no more to enquire, and be satisfied, for *himself*, whether he has a soul, than a papist is to enquire, *personally*, after religious truth. Allow me to ask a question here—Among philosophers, whom shall a christian *consult* on this subject? And, seeing they disagree in their opinions, whom shall he *credit*? Where is philosophical infallibility? This is one instance in which you appear to be governed by the same principle as holy-mother-church. Another follows.

It is the standing characteristic of a protestant to avow the sufficiency and free use of the scriptures.—But the interdiction of the bible is known to belong to the Italian Pontiff. In this also you seem readily to agree with him—for, you say, 'It behoves every rational christian to prove the consistency of the articles of his faith with true *philosophy* and 'the nature of things.' (ib. p. 194.) Suppose he has not opportunity to do this? or ability? Why then he must believe, if he believes at all, on the authority of another; and that other, for ought he knows, may be wrong as well as right. Would he learn the *nature* of intelligent creatures—of sin—of grace—of the great Supreme—of heaven—of hell? The bible *alone* can teach him. But, I suppose this is not your design. Who shall assure him of the real and fixed meaning of *true philosophy*? Every one fondly concludes that *his* system of philosophy is the *true*, however widely he may differ from others. And every one knows that, 'There is hardly a word in the English language of more vague and indeterminate meaning than the word *nature*.' While the learned therefore are settling the meaning of terms on the one hand, and ascertaining true philosophy on the other, 'The rational christian,' must prove an empty name; unless the bare sound of words is sufficient to constitute that character. I am sorry to see the bible so treated as to lay a foundation for such reflections. Upon your principle, we are in a most deplorable situation indeed!—'The nature of things,' not one in a thousand can, with precision, explain; nor one in a thousand with certainty tell us what is *true philosophy*; and, yet, to these the rational christian is referred to 'prove the consistency of the articles of his faith.' Is there one such character upon earth?

After all—no man living can prove that the articles of my faith were ever referred to philosophy and the nature of things,

things, by my creator; either to ascertain their being genuine, or to confirm their truth. Yes, sir, the faith of God's elect, that faith which works by love and purifies the heart, that faith the end of which is the salvation of the soul; is of the operation of God in the man, derives its being and energy from the eternal Spirit, and knows NO *authority* for its 'articles' but the revealed will of God in the scriptures. One would suppose that no man can soberly aver, that the faith with which my everlasting happiness is inseparably united, derives any part of its value from philosophy. The greatest philosopher may possibly be an unbeliever in God's method of saving sinners; for, 'the world by wisdom knows not God:' while the most illiterate, in a philosophical sense, may believe to the saving of his soul; for, 'God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence.' 1 Cor. i. 27. And I am not a little confirmed in my opinion on this subject, by your evidence; for you freely declare that these are 'matters in which the *bulk* of mankind have very little to do.' (ib. *Intro.* p. 11.) It is from hence, I suppose, that you were willing 'to give all the satisfaction you were able to inquisitive natural philosophers;' because you were 'not writing for the *use* of any others.' (ib. p. 247. 250.) If 'the importance of the doctrines for which *you* contend can hardly be rated too high;' (ib. p. 410.) you will forgive me, sir, if I think the vulgar ought to be made to understand them clearly; and, that the man really wants affection for his neighbor who will not strain every nerve to diffuse such knowledge far and wide. I know it may be said, 'The vulgar are not *capable* of receiving these things.' But would not a papist adopt the same apology for his conduct? However, no man has a right to make such an assertion who has not used his utmost endeavors to instruct them. What! must we learn the things which belong to our salvation from philosophy; and, yet, but here and there one be found who is 'inquisitive' or acute enough to understand them? Is this *christian* zeal? This is one reason for the title prefixed to these letters; the next paragraph will furnish another; and we shall find others as we go forwards.

'Materialism,' you say, 'is that fundamental principle in true philosophy which is *alone* perfectly consonant to the doctrine of the scriptures, and must in the progress of inquiry soon appear to be so; and then should it be found
' that

' that an unquestionably true philosophy teaches one thing
' and revelation another, the latter could not stand its ground
' but must inevitably be exploded as contrary to truth and
' fact.' (ib. p. 410, 411.) Here, sir, I must beg leave to
observe that, if materialism be the doctrine of the scriptures,
there is no danger of their being '*exploded*' for teaching it
when they are understood—But, must the *truth* of scripture
depend on the doctrine of materialism? Perhaps not. Of
this hereafter. If ever a time shall come when true philosophy
will appear superior to revelation, either in its doctrine or
authority, it must be because it is so *now*; for, in this case,
nothing can be '*contrary to truth and fact*,' a thousand years
to come, but what was so a thousand past. Upon this sup-
position the bible can be of no possible service to us at all;
and those who have preferred it to philosophy have been
essentially mistaken; and are now and will be for ever, no
one knows where nor what: because philosophy, though
' *unquestionably true*,' has no sure data from which to assert
the future felicity of the believer or the misery of the infidel.
On this principle also the resurrection of the dead, which
you profess to believe, must be given up; because, you
know, it is beyond the sphere of philosophical instruction.
Finding such passages as these in your works, some of your
readers have been disposed to think you a deist in disguise;
but, for my own part, after your repeated professions of
regard to the word of God, I should rather attribute what
you say to the eager defence of a system, without properly
considering its tendency, than suspect your sincerity. And,
if I err in doing so, it is on the most friendly side. But, if
ever it will be right and just to explode the scriptures as
contrary to truth and fact, as contrary to an unquestionably
true philosophy, let us even do it at once; for the same
reason that will exist in any future period to justify such
conduct, *must* exist at this moment.

However, before that be done, allow me one remark.
Are you not told, sir, that ' God has magnified his WORD
' above *all* his name?' Ps. cxxxviii. 2. that ' the holy *scriptures*
' are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith in
' Christ Jesus?' 2 Tim. iii. 15. Are such assertions true of
philosophy? Is philosophy set up as the standard of light
and knowledge; and, if we speak not according to its
dictates, it is because there is *no light* in us? Isai. viii. 20.
This is true of the bible; but of no other book whatever.
Can philosophy shew us how ' mercy and truth have met

C

' together,

‘together, how righteousness and peace have embraced each other, in a sinner’s salvation?’ Pf. lxxxv. 10. This is the glorious prerogative and exclusive privilege of the bible. To deny this ‘*truth and fact*’ of revelation is, in theory, to reduce us to the state of pagans: in which indeed it would be the comparative happiness of some persons to live and die. But, while GOD *lives* his holy word has nothing to fear from philosophy nor philosophers; for it will continue to rise superior to both in future, as it has always done in ages past. The Holy Spirit never used philosophy for opening the eyes of the blind—for testifying pardon to the guilty and relieving the burdened conscience—for revealing to the believer his bright inheritance beyond the skies. It is the gospel of Christ, and not philosophy, that is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. Rom i. 16. ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them who love him.’ In this case, *whom* shall we consult? Would you send us to the *academies* of science? Would you recommend the *rules* of philosophizing? Can these instruct us? No, sir; they would disappoint us, and we should return ashamed. ‘But,’ thanks to sovereign mercy, we have an infallible guide, ‘God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.’ 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. That moral philosophy which is not founded in revealed religion is but of little comparative importance now; and when the master of the house rises up and shuts the door, the subjects of it will ask for entrance in vain. With this thought in view, let me recommend to your serious reflections, the parable of the *wise and foolish* virgins. I am, &c.

L E T T E R I I I.

REVEREND SIR,

IN this letter will be considered a further proof of your want of attachment to revealed religion; or, rather, I had almost said, an effectual insinuation to overthrow it. For, if the three following things be as you say, it is not of much consequence who has a bible or who has none.

When

When I behold the unwarrantable liberty you take with the most sacred of all *characters*, I am grieved and puzzled. I mean the character of *God*, as the author and object of religious worship—The character of our *Lord Jesus Christ*, in the days of his ministry—And the character of his servant *Paul*, in discharging the duties of his important office. I said *unwarrantable liberty*; because it appears to me in that light, and my reasons for it you will find below.

I. Let me begin with the apostle *Paul*. When that great and good man was writing to his friends at Thessalonica, with his friendly counsel he mingled a most ardent petition for their present and future glory, in these words—‘ And ‘ the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray ‘ God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved ‘ blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ 1 Thess. v. 23. As if he had said, ‘ May the God of peace himself ‘ make you largely and constantly experience his sanctifying ‘ influence in the several powers of your rational *spirit*, in ‘ the natural appetites of your *soul**, and the several members ‘ of your *body*; that your whole *persons* may stand complete ‘ in Christ at his coming and his kingdom; in opposition ‘ to many who are *now* the enemies of his cross, and who ‘ will *then* be found at his left hand.’ This appears to me the apostle’s meaning; and, in which, he clearly sets before us a true and real distinction between an intelligent principle in man and the mortal body. This language, you are pleased to say, the apostle ‘ used according to the philosophy of his ‘ time, without hinting at a possibility of any separation of ‘ the several parts.’ (v. i. p. 130.) But if the parts are distinct, in nature, from each other, which ‘ constitute a ‘ complete man,’ it is so plain that they may be separated when the Creator chuses, that there was no occasion for the apostle to drop the least ‘ hint’ about it. And especially as the subject of his discourse was not about man’s constitution but his happiness. If man be only an animated mass of matter, what a waste of words! To what purpose did he

C 2

pray

* Whoever chuses to consult the original of the old testament will find various places where the word (נפש) *soul* stands for *animal appetite*; and is translated by the LXX by ψυχῶν, which is the word Paul uses. See, for instance, Deut. xxiii. 24. Ps. lxxviii. 18. Prov. xxv. 25. Isai. xxix. 8. Lam. i. 11, 19.

pray for sanctifying grace to be imparted to what *could not* be defiled!—to what *did not* exist! Is this the sensible, the acute, the accurate apostle of the gentiles! He adapted his language ‘*to the philosophy of the time.*’ Sooner than allow him to be a friend to the doctrine of the soul he must be a *time server*; one of the worst of characters! He must be represented as consulting the ignorance and prejudice of men more than the truth and glory of God! Is this the man who could so frequently and openly appeal to his hearers for his integrity both towards men and towards God! Be pleased to read his address to the *Ephesian* elders. ‘Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL the *counsel* of God.’ Acts xx. 26, 27. And to the church at *Corinth*. ‘For we are not as many, who corrupt the word of God; but as of *sincerity*, but as of *God*, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.’—And ‘have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifestation of the *truth*, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.’ 2 Cor. ii. 17. iv. 2. And, even to this *same* church he says, ‘For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, *not as pleasing men*, but God who trieth our hearts.’ 1 Thess. ii. 3, 4. It is true, there were human weaknesses and Jewish prejudices at which he connived; for he became all things to all men, that he might gain some; but it is demonstrable that he never departed from truth, that he never relaxed his attachment to it, that he never, in the least, corrupted it, in his condescending conduct to those about him. The man who can truckle to the prejudice of ‘*his time*,’ when TRUTH is at stake, is unworthy of the smallest share of human credit; but, on the contrary, he ought to be treated as the burden and pest of society. Such a man, one would suppose, must be as destitute of common sense, as of common honesty. Paul was second to none but his master, either as a divine or a casuist; and yet, it seems, *all* must be sacrificed to the conformity of his time, lest he should be found to oppose your ‘*favorite hypothesis*,’ against which nothing can be suffered to prevail. You know, sir, it has long been thought the mark of a bad cause when reflection on characters is substituted in the room of argument. Whether such an instance be not now before

us the reader will judge. It is one thing to *suppose* our apostle biased by the influence of custom, and another to *prove* it : but if the latter cannot be done, the former must be a mere impotent innuendo, and absolutely unworthy of a candid writer.

And, yet, your conduct is no less *puzzling* than grievous. For, if the apostle was an honest man, and nevertheless did as you say, then we must conclude he was an *ignorant* one. But, how you will make this idea comport with your own words, I cannot conjecture : for, you justly observe that, though ' the writers of the scriptures were not philosophers, ' yet they had instruction *infinitely* superior to any philosophical school.' (ib. p. 355. v. iii. p. 239.) This declaration no one disputes—And while it remains a fact there never will arrive a period in which ' unquestionably true philosophy' and the holy scriptures will be discordant. Indeed, it is impossible that such a case should occur, but upon the absurd supposition that the instructor of the sacred writers was a stranger to philosophy. Who was the '*infinitely superior*' instructor to these men? The apostle Peter sa. s, ' Holy ' men of God spake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*,' 2 Pet. i. ult. Elsewhere he tells us, ' The *Spirit of Christ* ' testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory ' that should follow.' 1 Pet. i. 11. And his brother Paul says, ' All scripture is given by the inspiration of GOD.' 2 Tim. iii. 16. If, upon the whole, philosophers in general can arrive at truth by ordinary instruction, it cannot be reasonably supposed that those who have '*infinitely superior*' instruction should be enslaved by error : and, therefore, those who are of the inferior class should be very careful how they attack the *integrity* or *understanding* of their superiors ; lest the day should come when their envenomed darts may return, with additional force on themselves. The character of our great apostle will shine with such splendor in that day, as to confound the adversaries of it for ever. Yea, even now, it is nobly superior to all the *little* opposition of ignorance, or prejudice, or infidelity. Never commend me to that hypothesis which must be supported at the expence of the highest and brightest human character that ever adorned the world or the church !

II. The character of our *Lord Jesus Christ* must also be sacrificed to this same system. Indeed it is not a matter of surprize to find the servant charged with sneaking duplicity, when the master is arraigned under the same indictment.

The

The Savior having encouraged his disciples against the terrors of persecution, by telling them that men could only kill the body, but not the soul; you scruple not to assert that, 'Christ, if he used the term soul in distinction from the body (which is not certain), he did it in compliance with the prevailing opinion of the times: as also he spake of such as were possessed of dæmons, though he *certainly did not believe* the existence of such dæmons.' (v. i. p. 129, 130.) The text in question will be considered when we come to speak of a separate state in Letter XXIII. Let it suffice to observe at present that, even the Son of God himself must be guilty of the same *time-serving* temper with our apostle, sooner than be supposed to drop any thing contrary to your darling theme. But, where has Christ said, or even hinted, that he '*certainly did not believe* the existence of such dæmons?' Till you name the place, and prove your words, you must pardon me, sir, if I say you believe without evidence, and assert without authority.

Though it is not the business of these letters to examine this question, yet, I may be excused, if I offer a thought upon it passing. A certain author asks, 'Can a single instance be produced from any greek author, before the publication of christianity, in which *δαίμονες* or *δαίμονια* is used to signify any other beings than the gentile deities?' Suppose 'a single instance' cannot be 'produced?' What is there to be gained by such a concession? Would it from thence follow that they are used improperly in the bible? Is christianity a system of pagan mythology? It is a system of divine truth; and therefore plainness became it. It is no collusion with Satan, like paganism; and therefore it is not afraid to speak out. Besides, does it appear that the pagan idolators *knew* what they worshipped? and, if they did, would they openly and freely avow the object? Let this be ascertained. In the mean time, permit me to observe that, it is by no means wonderful, if they did *not* signify the same beings by these terms which the word of God does. Nevertheless who would assert that the Lord Jesus Christ, or his apostles, were as ignorant or irresolute as the ancient philosophers? And, yet, this must not only be said but proved, if the above question be made to mean any thing to our present purpose.

Let us hear the apostle. 'The things which the gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to *devils*, (*δαίμονις*) and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with
' devils.'

‘ devils.’ 1 Cor. x. 21. It is plain that Paul is here speaking of pagan idolatry, and, it is as plain that the pagans, like the papists, disavowed worshipping their idols; but said they paid their worship to some other being through them—their departed heroes, or some other objects, as custom or convenience led the way. These their writers might call dæmons, without having a just perception of the objects of which they spoke. But, the truth is, *Satan* is the God of this world, *from* him all such worship derives its authority, *by* him all such worshippers are influenced, and *with* him they have fellowship in all their devotions. This appears to me the apostle’s meaning: and, that he uses the term (*δαίμονιον*) dæmon designedly to set this device of Satan in the deception of the nations in its true and proper light; and, to let us know, that the devil and his angels are, in fact, the only objects on whom all idolatrous worship ultimately terminates. Did not ‘*such dæmons*’ exist, there could not possibly be any fellowship with them; but as idolaters have fellowship with them in their professed devotions, therefore there are such dæmons in being. This Paul knew to be the truth, and had been a truth from the beginning; and therefore he freely and affectionately guards his friends at Corinth against all participation in idol-worship.

And did the master know, or believe, *lest*, on this subject, than the servant? I should suppose not. What you mean by a dæmon I cannot say—whether a statue, a spectre, an unintelligent principle of evil, or somewhat else—but, when I read, or use, the term, I always understand by it, an apostate intelligent spirit, who is a constant enemy to mankind. I apprehend this was the Jewish notion in the days of Christ’s ministry and miracles. However, you say it is *certain* that he believed no such thing. Suffer me, sir, to ask you a question—Were the Lord of glory *tempted* in the wilderness by a non-entity? Did not the devils cry out, saying, ‘What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?’ ‘Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?’ The devils besought him, saying, if thou cast us out, suffer us ‘to go away into the herd of swine. And he said unto them, ‘Go. And they went into the herd of swine.’ Mat. iv. 1. viii. 29. Is this a narration of facts, or of fiction? Is Christ here displaying the glory of his power; or is it a mere juggle to amuse the credulous? Excuse this digression, and I go on.

What-

Whatever the prevailing sentiment was, either respecting a soul, or demons, it seems it was contrary to *fact*, and Christ *knew* it to be contrary to fact, if you are right, and therefore only used such language according to the '*opinion of the times*;' without so much as once attempting to inform his followers of the deception! For a man to call himself a christian, and yet charge the Savior with want of integrity, or humanity, or both, in order to support an hypothesis, requires a cheek impervious to a blush, and—but I forbear. Can he be a wise and good man who would sacrifice his reputation, and even his sense and reason, to popularity! He must be ambitious of human applause to a very awful degree, who could act such a part either to obtain or preserve it! And, yet, with what other motive the Redeemer could be governed in the account you give of his conduct, I must leave with you to say. But, sir, is this the character on which the most outrageous malevolence itself could not fix a stain! in which the smallest flaw could not be discerned! A character that never was afraid freely, openly, and frequently to rebuke the great men of the nation, both in church and state! Shall he stoop, all the way through his ministry, to curry favor with the populace! What had he to expect from these or fear from those? Is this HE that could say of his Father, 'I do always the things that *please* him.' John viii. 29. 'O Father, I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.' John xvii. 4. Could he challenge his bitterest enemies to 'convince him of sin?' John viii. 46. Must he, after all, be charged with acting a part which you yourself despise, lest he should be found to oppose your hypothesis!! You are not ~~not~~ to be told, sir, how the public judge of an author who can trifle with the most important of all characters to support his opinion—Nor what is to be apprehended at last for indulging ourselves in such conduct. Neither ignorance, nor integrity, will preserve such a face from confusion at the general assize of the world! To all this I add,

III. Your view of the divine character as the *author and object of worship*. On this subject you express yourself thus. 'The Divine Being has *wisely* adapted the system of religion, and the modes of our religious worship, and every thing belonging to it, to our *imperfect* view of things.' (v. iii. p. 298.) According to this reasoning divine *wisdom* was displayed, not ~~on~~ proposing to his creatures and enjoining on them,

them, such rules and ends of worship as suited *his own glory*; but such as corresponded with their '*imperfect view of things*.' Is this a just conception of the wisdom of God? Nothing, surely, can be further from truth. For, upon this principle, religious worship is not founded in the infinite excellency of the eternal GOD, but in our fallen depraved nature; which is, in effect, to say, 'There is no religion at all.' This reminds me of what *Socinus* says on a similar occasion. 'The precepts of the old testament are, for the most part such, that it is hard to believe that they proceed from God; they are either so light, or vain, or superstitious, or even foolish or ridiculous: and, upon the whole they seem not to be worthy of God.' (See Ryland's Contemplations, v. ii. p. 139. note.) If such be the language of the professed friends of religion, what are we to apprehend from its real enemies? If the appointments of the old testament be not worthy of God, according to *Socinus*; and, if every thing belonging to religion be wisely adapted to our *imperfect view* of things, as you tell us; it is no great wonder that so few concern themselves about it. And, yet, one should almost suppose, if God had so far condescended as to consult and accommodate his worship to our *weakness*; I say, in that case, it might have been expected that, *by far*, the major part of mankind would have been humble and zealous worshippers of him. Especially, if man be that good-natured and tractable creature, which some would have us believe! But, alas! the awful reverse is the fact. And, from this fact, it is as demonstrable as any moral truth can be, that the things of God are '*foolishness*' to every natural man in the world. For which reason, nothing can be plainer than that you are totally mistaken in teaching that God respected our *imperfection* in his holy worship. On this subject, Dr. Watts has expressed my opinion clearly; and therefore I shall give it you in his words. '*Infidelity* is a growing weed; the contempt and ridicule of revealed religion flourish and become fashionable among the gay part of the world; and if you are not furnished with some solid proofs of the gospel of Christ, you may be in great danger of losing your faith: you may be tempted to yield up your religion to a witty jest, and become a heathen for company.' It is not with me to pronounce on your *design* in this matter, charity would lead one to hope the best; but, as to the *fact*, there is no room for hesitation. It is morally impossible for revealed

religion to be regarded, and for vital godliness to flourish, where the doctrines you have advanced in this letter are believed and embraced. I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

REVEREND SIR,

THE light of opening dawn, and that of meridian day, however disproportioned, you know to be *naturally* alike. Not so, with respect to the truths of revealed religion and the inventions of men. The *first* are from above, the *last* from beneath. A well directed, and well executed, defence of christianity, is the noblest work of a rational creature. Every effort of the kind is praise-worthy.

When a sensible and learned author tells the public that he has 'spent the *greatest* part of his life in the *study* and *defence* of christianity;' (v. i. pref. p. 16.) we cannot forbear applauding his diligence and zeal. And, from a man of parts and study, we naturally expect a masterly performance. His *theme* is copious, important, interesting—his *materials* the written word, and the work of the Spirit—his *design* the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. But, how sadly are we chagrined and disappointed, to find christianity unchristianized; and our attention called to what has little or no relation to it besides the name! The disappointment, however, ceases to be matter of surprize, when we are wished to draw our knowledge of christianity, not so much from the bible, as true philosophy and ecclesiastical history. For, when I give up the revelation of God in the scriptures, as the *sole* ground and reason of my faith and conduct, it cannot be of much consequence what I may happen to substitute in its stead; for all besides is on a level. You may name, if you please, the *Pope*, *Zoroaster*, *Mahomet*, *Confucius*, *Socrates*, or *Saint* any one.—Whether I become the disciple of one, or the other, or neither of them all, it is quite equal; because my conscience is known by none of them, and consequently can neither be governed nor comforted by the one nor the other. The bible is the *ONLY* source from which to draw our conceptions of christianity; and the *ONLY* authority

authority on which to build our faith in its various doctrines : and, therefore, if this be discarded, whatever we may advance under the name of christianity, will eventually appear to be *not* ' from heaven, but of men ;' and will finally be treated as such.

What if I copied *Jortin's* language ? He says, ' Ecclesiastical history is a sort of enchanted land, where it is hard to distinguish truth from false appearances, and a maze which requires more than Ariadne's clue.' (Rem. Eccl. Hist. v. i. pref.) What if I adopted *Hay's* sentiment ? ' *Ecclesiastical History* ! the most insignificant, least entertaining, and least instructive of all histories ! A narrative either of most impertinent trifles, or else of most shocking crimes.' (Relig. Philos. p. 208.) If these accounts be *true*, is it not strange to send us thither to learn any thing of christianity ? But, say these authors have said the *worst* of it ; yet, still, it is not the word of God. If the bible be not sufficient, *of itself*, in point of evidence and authority, to ascertain its own meaning, both in doctrine and duty, let us freely and fairly give it up—for, if it be dependent on any other writing, it must be inferior to that writing ; and, consequently, cannot have, *of itself*, sufficient proofs of a divine original. I never understood that it was the design of *history* to give evidence in any matter *beyond*, or *prior to*, its own date. Ecclesiastical history can only describe the opinions and practice of its *own time*, and there it ends. And, these I end with it. Christianity was before it ; and derives no part of its value from it. For this reason I have *nothing* to do with it in the present business. However, I have not said this to lessen the authority of ecclesiastical history on any question where its evidence is competent, far from it ; but simply and only to point out the fallacy of appealing to it on this subject. And, I should suppose that your conduct, in this case, would strike every *lover* of his bible in the same point of light. At most it can be but mere *collateral* evidence ; the truths and authority of scripture are totally independent of it.

Philosophy also has its uses. By it you behold the wonderful works of HIM who made the world, in the various parts of the astonishing fabric ; but, when it is adduced in proof of christianity, all its evidence amounts to—*nothing*. It cannot say *how* the world was formed—nor, *out of* what it was made—nor, *how long since* it was brought into being—nor can it fully investigate *the laws* by which it is governed.

Its total incompetency to instruct us in morality and religion was hinted before; (Letter II.) and, therefore, it is futile and vain to fix any part of the truth or importance of christianity on its doctrines or authority,

Christianity, like the Redeemer's vesture or coat, is all of a piece. To divide it therefore is not merely to disfigure, but destroy it. The Roman soldiers paid more attention to the Savior's robe for its *curiosity*, than some learned pens have done to his gospel for its *infinite glory*. Your view of christianity seems to me to be a distorted figure of natural religion; and, as such, sir, you will permit me to say, it is neither the one nor the other. For, exclude the deity and the atonement of Christ from christianity; and, what have you left, but an empty name? And, an empty name it will eventually prove. Were I addressing a deist, I might lay down the following axioms as worthy of his notice. As

I. That, it is not *impossible* for God to vouchsafe to man a revelation of his mind and will.

II. That, the bestowment of such a favor is not *improbable*. Though man be unworthy of it, yet the supposition is neither extravagant nor unreasonable.

III. That, allowing the privilege to be granted, it is right to expect a revelation of such *truths* as the light of nature, or reason, could neither devise nor acquire.

IV. That, such truths being revealed, *reason*, however refined, *ought not* to be considered as their rule or standard; the province of reason being only to judge of the evidence by which they come recommended us.

V. That the bible possesses *all such criteria*, or recommends itself to us, by all such external and internal evidence, with which a divine revelation could be rationally expected to be accompanied.

VI. That when we refuse any *one* of those truths which the bible reveals, we reject the *authority* by which the *whole* is supported.

VII. That man is not now in the same *moral state* as when he came first from the hand of his maker.

VIII. That reason, or the light of nature, cannot inform us what he was *then*, how he came to be what he is *now*, nor what he will be in *future*.

IX. That the light of nature cannot tell us *how* God chuses to pardon sin, nor whether he *will do it* at all, nor to what *extent* the blessing shall reach if once enjoyed.

X. That

X. That the soul of man is capable of more happiness than *the whole creation* can afford him ; but reason can never describe the good that is suited to him, nor shew him how to possess it.

But, though I am not concerned with a deist, for you *profess* yourself a christian, yet, the above propositions are not foreign to our present business. They are designed to *set up* the authority of the scriptures in opposition to the decisions of philosophy and ecclesiastical history—in opposition to all the most refined possible human inventions in matters of religion : and, as such, they are recommended to your serious consideration.

Religion, you know, sir, is become one of the most vague of all terms. It is promiscuously used of paganism, mahometanism, judaism, and popery ; as also of several denominations which obtain among protestants. But there are only *two* senses in which its meaning can be significant in the present question. When I use it for any thing *without us*, I design by it that body of divine truth which God has revealed to us in his word. And, my conceptions of *internal religion*, I shall express in the words of the elegant and evangelical Mr. *Hervey*. ‘ To be reconciled to the omnipotent God ; to be interested in the unsearchable riches of Christ ; to be renewed in our hearts, and influenced in our lives, by the sanctifying operations of the Divine Spirit ; this is evangelical righteousness ; *this is genuine religion* ; this is the kingdom of God established in the soul.’ These two views of religion, in my opinion, constitute the body and soul of christianity ; and, all besides is foreign from it. For, as Dr. *Watts* justly observes, ‘ We know not the *nature* of christianity, if we do not *feel a want* of Christ when we bow ourselves before God.’

Natural religion also is an ambiguous phrase. When some people hear it their thoughts immediately advert to pagan idolatry—while others use it to signify that worship which they say we ought to render the Almighty according to our best ability, apart from the instruction of scripture. Neither of which expresses its meaning, according to my idea of it. Natural religion, properly speaking, is that worship which is due to the great Supreme, from innocent intelligent creatures ; founded in the mutual relation of creator and creature ; and to be expressed in the way which he might chuse to reveal and appoint. The rule of natural religion is couched in the moral law, or the law of ten commands published on

Mount

Mount Sinai ; and, written, originally, on our first parents' minds. Where perfect obedience is righteously demanded, the lawgiver has a right to appoint what he pleases for a test of it. And nothing could be a more reasonable and equitable expression of *this* right and *that* obedience than the moral law contains. '*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*' And '*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*' The blessing was suspended on an unflinching regard to this law ; and a curse was annexed to a breach of it. This may, with propriety be called, as it is, '*The covenant of works.*' In its constitution was included, as one great whole, all the human race, from Adam to his last born son ; of all which he was the natural and federal head and representative. It is clear that the creature had no right to withhold any part of this obedience, nor to interfere with the known mode of rendering it ; for, a departure from his primitive state, was the beginning of sin, of blame, and punishment. In this original constitution of things there was no mediator ; nor any promised in case of sin. In that state no more was known of God than was revealed ; nor could the creature have any conception of the great Jehovah, but as he stood related to him as his creator, benefactor, and lord. Under these relative characters his motives to obedience were noble, animating, and truly worthy of his holy and exalted state. The object of his worship was the Supreme Beauty and Supreme Good. From him he had his being and all his honor and blessedness. On his obedience and worship being continued ; his access to, and communion with, his beneficent maker depended ; and, on his disobedience, the just displeasure of his righteous Lord was threatened. The *first* is called LIFE : that is, not merely a continuance in being, but *happiness*. The *last* is called DEATH : that is, not non-existence or annihilation, but a change of state from felicity to *misery*. For every new state is a death to that which went before.

The introduction of sin produced, immediately, the loss of God's *moral image*, which was originally stamped on our first parents ; and, in them, on our nature. (R. p. 24.) Hence the scripture says, ' we have ALL *sinned*, and come short of 'the *glory* of God.' Rom. iii. 23. That, ' we are *dead* ' in trespasses and sins.' Eph. ii. 1. That ' we are alienated ' from the *life* of God, through the ignorance that is in us, ' because of the blindness of our heart.' Eph. iv. 18. In short, that ' we are *by nature* the children of wrath.' Eph. ii. 3.

This

This testimony is confirmed by universal fact. This is *moral death*; or, from the commencement of this mournful scene, all holy and happy intercourse between the creator and the creature ceased; nor has one of Adam's posterity been found who *naturally* desired to have the friendship renewed. Nor is it ever restored till the soul is quickened by the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; as a token of interest in '*the covenant of grace*.' The penalty of *corporal death* was also incurred by sin. 'By one man sin entered into the world, and *death* by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Rom. v. 12. For wise reasons this sentence was not instantly executed, like the former; but, from that moment, our great progenitors grew up to mortality and death. There is no accounting for the universality of corporal death, but on the scripture testimony of its being a penal evil. To say it flows from mere physical principles, besides contradicting the word of God, is asserting without proof. Whether it is weaker to believe *without* evidence, than it is perverse to believe *contrary* to it; I shall leave the reader to judge. Besides, were corporal death the consequent of simple nature in our composition, for the same reason it might occur again, in some given period, after the resurrection; and render another resurrection necessary, and then another and so on: which I apprehend is as far from your scheme as from the scripture doctrine. *Eternal death* only means, in my idea, the continuance of moral death; accompanied with such expressions of the divine displeasure as his holy law denounced in case of disobedience, and his righteous government inflicts in consequence of sin.

The author who concludes that natural and revealed religion are both the same, most evidently concludes without premises. For, on that principle, one, or the other must be superfluous; and, consequently, could not exist in the plan of infinite wisdom. The *former* was the religion of holy and innocent man; but, that character being lost, the religion of that state cannot accord with our circumstances as fallen creatures; or, if you please, our moral capacity, as apostate sinners, is not suited to that religion. If, therefore, the *latter* has no being, we are precisely in the same situation with devils; without help, and without hope. But, if we are favored with *revealed religion*, which you profess to believe, it must be found in the bible, and not in the schools of philosophy; in the bible, and not in the synods and councils of men; in the bible and no where else but there. Had
you

you felt the force of this demonstrative truth, we had not been sent to ' philosophy and the nature of things,' to examine and judge of what we believe.

To appeal from scripture, on this question, is to charge it with defect; which is neither acting the part of a protestant, nor an unprejudiced '*defender* of christianity.' A true protestant defender of christianity is always jealous for the honor of his bible. It is in vain to agitate a question on any given subject, if there be no standard or rule, *unexceptionably valid*, by which to try the merits of what is said to it. So here—If philosophy and the nature of things, may take place of the bible, it is to no purpose to urge one thing or another, as a matter of christian faith or duty, because nothing can be proved to be such. If this be the true state of the case, there may be a *nominal*, but there cannot be a *real*, difference between a *Briton* and the wildest *Indian*, in point of religious privilege. Philosophy, it is true, may have made a greater progress with us than with them; but philosophy is an entire stranger to that religion which secures the honor of an offended God in the salvation of a sinner. And, without this, we perish, we *all* perish for ever. That scheme which excludes a *mediator*, the Son of God incarnate; which excludes the divine agency of the *Holy Spirit*, as the sanctifier and comforter of his people; is neither the religion of nature nor revelation. In the religion of *nature*, no mediator was proposed to heal the breach that sin might superinduce; nor was repentance mentioned in that primeval state; much less mentioned as a token of returning favor; least of all as the procuring cause of the revival of former friendship.—But, it is the glorious characteristic of *revealed* religion to make known an all-sufficient Savior in our mediator, who '*gives* repentance to Israel and '*forgiveness* of sins.' For these reasons, sir, I think it was not saying too much when I said that your notion of christianity was neither the religion of nature nor revelation. I am, &c.

LETTER V.

LETTER V.

REVEREND SIR,

HOWEVER you may profess an attachment to revealed religion, you have not adopted a method of *defence* which answers its importance. On the contrary, if the doctrines you advance will bear the test, the bible must, of course, give way. This will clearly appear in your views of eternal punishment, in your account of the introduction of sin, in your opinion of calvinism, &c.

We begin with the profound and awful subject of *eternal punishment*. Here you say, 'No necessarian supposes that any of the human race will suffer eternally.' (v. ii. p. 149.) But why not some of the human race as well as some of the angels? Have they deserved eternal punishment *more* than men? Are they not *equally* the work of his hands? Do they not make a *part* of his extensive empire? Are not all the divine perfections, and the glory of his character and administration, as essentially concerned in the government of *one* branch of his dominion as *another*? What a pity, not to say folly, that we should suppose ourselves more loving and more compassionate than the eternal God! It is entirely on the credit of this *supposed* human lenity, that the doctrine of eternal punishment is denied. I allow there is no regular argument in support of a future universal restoration laid down by you; for regular argument does not seem to meet your approbation; but yet, in several places, you have an eye to it, and drop, now and then, a thought in favor of it. These scattered hints therefore you will permit me to collect together, that we may judge of their evidence and worth. With that view then let it be said, that you cannot maintain your notion of eventual happiness to *all* the human race, either from *necessity*—or from *suffering*—or from the *will of God*—or his *perfections*—or his *revealed word*: and, if so, it must fall to the ground.

I. Let us examine *necessity*. 'The sacred writers,' you say, 'were not, strictly speaking, *necessarians*, for they were not philosophers; but habitual devotion led them to refer all things to God. They did not reflect on the rigorous meaning of their language; and if they had been inter-

E

'rogated

'rogated on the subject they would not have been apprized of the *extent* of the necessarian scheme, and would have answered unfavorably to it.' (ib. p. 133, 148.) For this reason, it seems, we are not to expect any assistance, on this head, from 'the sacred writers,' because they were 'not apprized of the *extent*' of the question! If I should not hurt your modesty, sir, I would beg leave to ask a solution of the following difficulty. Pray how is it, that you should know more of philosophical necessity, and better understand the subject, than those men who had '*infinitely superior instruction to any philosophical school?*' If I have the happiness to know your meaning, all your readers may not; be so obliging therefore as to explain it to them.

Will any of the human race die in their sins? Yes; for you say, (ib. p. 156.) 'The necessarian believes all *late repentance*, especially after long confirmed habits of vice, altogether and necessarily ineffectual, there not being time to produce a change of disposition.' By this assertion there will be some, there may be many, who '*necessarily*' die in their sins. And will misery ensue? Yes; for you tell us, 'That the connection between vice and misery is *certain and demonstrable* on philosophical necessity.' (ib. p. 163.) So then, we find some sinners in future misery, by your own doctrine, necessarily suffering the tokens of divine displeasure. But, it may be, they will reform themselves? Not till their dispositions and habits be changed, if you be right; for you assure us, that from '*bad* dispositions and habits sin necessarily follows'—that 'the action *certainly* follows the motive'—and, that, 'motives have certain and necessary influence on the mind.' (ib. p. 52, 64, 65, 79.) So far we agree; and therefore conclude, from your own premises, the influence of motives is *necessarily certain*, all things considered as they were, whether the man be in heaven, earth, or hell. 'Rewards and punishments have the *fullest* effect on the plan of necessity,' you say, 'but on the contrary are lost.' (ib. p. 78.) No conclusive argument can be formed in favor of the ultimate happiness of all sinners, from the *hope* of reward, or the *fear* of punishment; because the sinner in eternity will be considered and treated as the sinner in time, that is, an enemy to God; unless there be a change of state in time; and this change neither hope nor fear will ever produce. This remark is confirmed by your own authority; for you say, 'The choice that was made yesterday, or to-day, the same would be made to-morrow,'

* morrow, if the state of mind was the same respecting the 'object of choice.' (ib. p. 7.) You may extend this concession to the utmost possible duration, without fearing any bad consequence from it. On your own principle therefore, sir, 'The reprobates are under a necessity of sinning, and 'sinning only.' (ib. p. 152.) I readily allow that there is a 'fixed law of nature respecting the will and the influence 'of motives;' (ib. p. 7, 8.) and therefore it is that I assert openly, what you do by implication; namely, that the choice of angels and men in hell will be the same to all eternity, they were before the misery of hell was felt; if there be not a change in the 'previous state of the mind, and the view 'of things;' or, in other words, 'that, with the same state 'of mind, the same strength of any particular passion, and 'the same views of things, they will *always, voluntarily,* 'make the same choice, and come to the same determination.' (ib. p. 7) If 'necessity' therefore 'be the cause of *constancy,*' (ib. p. 174.) and, if the same choice will be *constantly* made while in the same state of mind; as you say and I believe; there is no other proof needed to ascertain the eternity of punishment to angels and men. Thus, sir, if you allow yourself to be consistent, your own view of necessity will lead you to embrace the doctrine you oppose. You have very freely proved to us that a *bad* disposition is the necessary source of sin, and that men, under that disposition, will necessarily continue to sin till there be a change in the state of mind: for, you justly observe, that 'choice supposes circumstances, the previous state of the mind, and the view 'of objects present.' (ib. p. 26.) On earth, 'the carnal 'mind is *enmity* against God.' Rom. viii. 7. There is no proof of its being less at enmity in future misery. While here, sinners flatter themselves with the hopes of, what they call, *happiness*; but, in hell, where despair reigns, their hopes all vanish. As God was an object of their hatred here, so he will remain for ever, if no change take place. What change is necessary—whether it be possible—or, whence it must come; we can never learn from philosophical necessity. In order to this deliverance, there must be a new previous state of mind, new views of objects, and new motives. This change therefore includes such a conscious and operative perception of the infinite excellence and grace, of the adorable purity and justice, of the blessed God; as will engage the soul unfeignedly to love and fear him, to approve and applaud the whole display of his sovereign glory in his

judgments and his mercy. This change will never take place in future misery ; and therefore future misery will never end.

According to your philosophical necessity, ' the future ' happiness or misery of *all* men are *certainly foreknown and appointed* by God.' (ib. p. 152.) In this one article, I perceive, predestination is allowed to agree with necessity. Now, if predestination and necessity unite in this instance, it will be to no purpose to say they are discordant in others ; for if they agree in the END, they must also agree in the *means* which bring about that end ; or end, or means, must cease to be the result of unerring wisdom. For this reason you are either to deny the premises, or shew the fallacy of the conclusion. But, if both remain, it will be found that *necessity*, when properly understood, is only another term for *predestination* ; and, *this* being a stranger to universal restoration, *that*, of course, must be the same.

From this part of the subject, I should have proceeded to the second article ; but, you will forgive me, if I turn aside a few minutes to another consideration of it. As if you apprehended that necessity *alone* would fail in proving universal restitution, you introduce the doctrine of *annihilation* in aid of that defect. But, I presume that *this* will be found as foreign from the business as *that*. ' Necessity,' you say, ' may admit of the *annihilation* of the wicked—but their ' having the benefit of the resurrection, you strongly lean to ' the everlasting happiness of *all*. And this' you consider ' a most sublime and glorious idea.' (ib. p. 127) In order to prove that an ' *idea is sublime and glorious*,' it should first be shown that the idea is *true* ; which, as yet, is not done ; and therefore your exultation is premature. As to the wicked being raised from the dead, this cannot affect the question in the least ; for upon your hypothesis, neither future happiness or misery will take place till that period. Or, rather, the resurrection of the wicked is an argument in favor of eternal punishment. For if they rise with the same *bad disposition and habit*, by which they were governed down to death ; and if your former concessions in favor of *constant sinning* speak the truth ; they rise from the dead, not to be ultimately happy as you teach, but everlastingly miserable as the prophet Daniel taught. ' *Some to shame and everlasting contempt.*' Dan. xii. 2. If, therefore, you allow the wicked to rise at all, and yet believe the non-eternity of punishment, you have to prove that the necessary change
takes

takes place in the grave, and to explain the prophet's meaning. I said *necessary change*—because the *nature* of sin and holiness is, in every sense of the word, absolutely immutable. For which reason, a *wicked man*, whether in time or eternity, can never possibly be a *happy man*. 'Righteousness and 'unrighteousness, light and darkness, can never have fellowship one with another.' 2 Cor. vi. 14.

A desperate disease requires a desperate remedy. Whatever opinion 'admits of annihilation,' comes under this description.

'Nature's first wish is *endless happiness*;

'*Annihilation* is an after thought,

'A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies.

'And oh! what depth of horror lies inclosed!

'For non-existence no man ever wish'd,

'But, *first*, he wish'd the DEITY destroy'd.' YOUNG.

If this therefore be included in philosophical necessity, I shall not envy the disciples of such a tutor, nor covet the felicity of such a scheme. A scheme that may defeat all the ends of good government in a moment; whether in the hands of men or of God. For, let a man be the most atrocious of all characters, a knife, or a pistol, will put him beyond the reach of justice, divine or human, whenever he thinks proper. 'What an *imaginary* tale is this! How far from *fact*! It is hard to say what sacrifices an author must make before he can allow it to appear in his system, even as a *speculation*! But prejudice, and a bad cause, will lead some men to *take* such steps, as would make *real* defenders of christianity shudder even to *contemplate* afar off. What a universal gloom must pervade the soul of a gracious man—what halcyon days for the vicious and profane—were annihilation true! But—As you seem only to name it in a collateral way, I dismiss it.

II. *Suffering*. This is another part of your evidence for the ultimate happiness of *all* sinners. I am sorry, sir, to see you discover so much inattention to the nature of suffering and the feelings of the sufferer. I call it *inattention*, lest you should have been offended if I had called it *ignorance*.

'Future punishments,' you say, 'will answer the same purpose as temporal ones are found to do, all which tend 'to *good*, and are evidently admitted for that purpose.' (ib. p. 150.) It is an old remark, that 'the devils have 'suffered the tokens of divine displeasure now above five 'thousand years, and there is no appearance of *reformation*' in

‘in them yet, nor any tendency towards it.’ This assertion is true and deeply effects your scheme : and for that reason deserves your consideration. This far, however, I agree with you, that whatever ‘purpose’ punishments are ‘admitted’ into the government of God to answer, that purpose they ‘evidently’ will answer : because ‘*his counsel shall stand and he will do all his pleasure.*’ If, by ‘good,’ you mean eventual ultimate happiness to *all*, it must stand for a mere assumption till you produce some proof of the fact ; and, this you can never do, till you become an inhabitant of the future world. ‘We know that all things work together for good to them who love God,’ Rom. viii. 28. and that they are ‘chastened of their father for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness.’ Heb. xii. 10. But nothing like this can be proved of the finally impenitent ; whereas, these *only* are the characters with which this question is concerned. Suppose suffering in hell to produce ‘grief and shame’ for past conduct—which, by the way, is but a mere supposition ; yet even this would afford no argument for universal restoration. For, to establish such a position, it must be proved that grief and shame would repair the injury done by sin to the divine law—produce a holy disposition of mind—and perfect subjection of will, with universal obedience in conduct. And, suppose this to be done, still you would fail in the event, if you could not prove that the supreme legislator had appointed the exercise of grief and shame in hell, as the meritorious cause and ground of the sinner’s being admitted into favor. What an Herculean task ! You say, ‘The sense a man may have of the deplorable state of his mind, and the alarming tendency of it, will operate so as to make him *at* better, and become better *disposed* for the future ; so that, upon another similar occasion, he would not do what he did before.’ (ib. p. 88.) This is far, very far, from being unexceptionably true, even in civil life ; but, in matters of real religion, it is absolutely foreign and useless ; as every day’s experience proves. However, if grief and shame will not produce the love and worship of God, as well as civil reformation, their being mentioned on this subject must be without effect.

‘Suffering, for voluntary actions,’ you tell us, ‘are calculated to produce the *greatest ultimate good.*’ (ib. p. 128.) What an unsupported assertion ! Is there any evidence of the *fact* ? Is there any evidence that the fact is *possible* ? Let it be given us.—But on your own authority, there is the

the strongest probability against it. You know, sir, who says that 'vice is the greatest of all evils, and CANNOT produce good but evil to us, both here and hereafter, and 'probably will through the whole of existence.' (ib. p. 116.) After this declaration, concerning the fruit of vice, and we all know the fruit of vice to be suffering—while no instance of the ultimate good of suffering is produced, nor any authority from which such instance can be inferred—to what purpose is it to tell us, that 'all the human race are training up in the same school of moral discipline, and are joint heirs of eternal life?' (ib. ded. p. 10. work, p. 111.) A thousand such assertions amount to nothing; unless you are supposed to fight against yourself. To propose the 'correcting a bad disposition, to make it bring forth good fruit, 'by proper discipline,' (v. iii. p. 309.) is equally foreign and inapplicable; because there is no proof of the fact, nor any reason to be given for believing that God ever designed, by any discipline, to make sinners the heirs of eternal life. The philosophical necessarian, you are pleased to say, 'considers the *natures* of mankind the same with his own.' So far he is right. 'As *improvable* as his.' In a moral sense, neither can be *improved*, to answer our present subject; but, if they would be happy, both must be *changed*. This change will never be effected by 'means of the discipline 'of the universal parent;' but, if ever it take place, it must be performed by the life giving energy of the eternal Spirit. This shews us the fallacy of your following words. The necessarian, you add, 'looking to a future period of final destination, considers vicious men as *brethren* even in 'virtue and happiness.' Suffice it to observe, if they are 'brethren in vice,' when they die, so will they be when they rise from the dead, and to all eternity. And, I am quite confirmed in this idea from your own suffrage; for you subjoin these words, 'but that in the mean time their sufferings are proportioned to their *depravity*.' (v. ii. p. 113.) That man, whose sufferings are 'proportioned' to his depravity, will never see the face of God with pleasure. That 'the sinner may be *reformed*,' (ib. p. 65.) by suffering, in the present state, may be allowed, but his '*depravity*' remains; for that is not so much in his actions as his heart. Nothing, therefore, can remedy this evil, but 'taking away the heart of stone, and giving him a heart of flesh.' Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Were all the sufferings in the universe to centre in one subject for ten thousand ages, his '*depravity*' would

would be just the same at the last, as at the first moment of the given time. The hope of reward, and the fear of punishment, may do somewhat in favor of moral virtue, but they have not a grain of efficacy towards producing the change that MUST precede the enjoyment of God in glory. Stop a current of water, in any given course, it will seek another; prevent it again it will find a different vent.—So here; however human '*depravity*' may be affected by external or temporary hindrances, nothing will prove an effectual cure but what will supersede its power for ever—*The riches and energy of sovereign grace.*

'Though there be an *impossibility* of acting well from a bad disposition or habit, yet,' you allow, 'that is no reason to forbear punishment.' (ib. p. 65.) According to this language suffering is the *punishment* of sin, and consequently can by no means *cure* it; unless you will allow the effect to destroy its cause. The habit of sin must be removed some other way, if removed at all; or the very *cause* and *end* of suffering must change their nature. It is not in the nature of those sufferings which men endure for the violation of human laws, to beget an affection and reverence for the legislative authority, or the person of the lawgiver: no more is it in the nature of those experienced by transgressors, whether in time or eternity, to excite a holy affection for the ruler of all worlds; which yet must take place before they can be happy in his presence. Suffering for sin never produced the most distant desire of this heavenly blessing; nor, can it be proved, that the blessed God ever appointed our sufferings to be either the procuring cause, or the preparative means, of eternal life. If ever that honor and happiness be enjoyed, the free favor of God in Christ must be the alpha and omega of our song. When a man is detected in an act of felony, or, when he is pursued and taken for committing such an act; it is likely he will put on the appearance of sorrow, yea he may be truly sorry—but, his sorrow arises, not from a penetrating conviction of the *evil* he has done, but from his being apprehended, and the consequences he fears will follow. For, let him remain in prison ever so long, and let his sufferings there be ever so sharp and pungent; yet, he will come out the same man he went in, as to his disposition towards the law and the lawgiver. The one he would violate, and the other he would insult again, were he sure of doing it with impunity. Nay; how often is this the case, in our day, notwithstanding all hazard! As the present question allows
of

of no *cause* to produce the needful change but suffering; and, as suffering cannot, in the nature of things, produce it; we may safely conclude, for ought appears to the contrary, that angels and men will suffer, as sinners, *for ever* in a future state.

I will leave you, sir, to suppose what pleasure it affords me to have my opinion confirmed by your own authority. 'According to the fixed laws of nature,' you say, 'our present and future happiness necessarily depends upon our good dispositions.' (ib. p. 116.) I should have said that our happiness 'depends' on the sovereign grace of God in Christ, because I can prove it; but, even upon your own evidence, it is clear that a wicked man can never be a happy man; let him be wicked as long as he may. And, your following words assure me that he will remain so for ever, when once he has entered an eternal world. You say that 'Events appointed of God are brought about by the vices of men; but the actions of the wicked are accounted for on principles by which men are actuated every day; and would do again in like circumstances.' (ib. p. 130, 131.) Neither length of time, nor intenseness of suffering, will invalidate the truth of this declaration. Men would repeat their conduct, 'in like circumstances,' however long between, except the 'principle' of action be superseded, and another implanted, by the Holy Spirit of God; and, therefore, it is merely beating the air to assert that 'great good and just punishment are the same thing.' (ib. p. 138.) For, were that the case, there would be *more* good in hell than in heaven. Every age, every family, and many sick beds, exemplify that sentiment of mine which you have readily confirmed. Go to a certain character on a bed of sickness—the patient, unasked, freely owns his folly, and tells you how sorry he is for his past life; and promises, with seeming concern of mind, if the Lord would but spare and restore him, how much better his future conduct shall be.—He is restored—but, where are his vows and his sorrow? All is fled. Being 'in like circumstances' as before, as you very justly observe, his conduct is the same 'again;' nay, perhaps, worse. You have kindly told us the *reason* of all this; for, you say it is 'impossible to act well from a bad disposition;' and it is evident that suffering will not cure it; and therefore sinners continue to sin as long as they exist, unless they are changed by the grace of God. Upon the whole, your language convinces me that unsupported

assertions and mere assumptions may escape the pens of very ingenious and learned men. This should make us the more careful not to trust *bare* assertions; because learning is no infallible test of truth. I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

REVEREND SIR,

HAVING examined necessity and suffering, and found that their evidence is in favor of eternal punishment, instead of the contrary, for which you produced them; we now go on to consider what is said,

III. From *the will of God*. Here, if at all, one should suppose, your strong arguments must be found. I so much approve the following assertion, that I have pleasure in laying it down as a solid maxim; viz. 'If events are not necessary, there is no providence, or moral government, or revealed religion, or prophecy.' (ib. p. 19.) Before this delightful truth the doctrine of contingencies must fall; like Dagon before the ark. The '*necessity of events*' depends ENTIRELY on the will of God. If, therefore, universal restoration be not a contingency, that is, nothing; if it be a truth; it must have its source in the will of God. You suppose this to be the case, and therefore tell us, that 'The father of all made us proper subjects of discipline to secure our greatest happiness.' (ib. p. 78.) That 'the ultimate object of virtue is *general* utility, and consists of such conduct as tends to make intelligent creatures the most truly happy in the *whole* of existence. The Divine Being, thus influenced, chuses such means *only* as are necessary to accomplish that end, and cannot fail in the application of them.' (ib. p. 120, 121.) And, that, 'God intended and wishes the *greatest possible happiness* of his creation.' (v. iii. introd. p. 22.) Now the whole sense of these several passages must appear to be totally against you; because, if they prove any thing, they prove too much. If 'the *greatest possible happiness*' for his intelligent creation, was ever the object of the divine '*intention and wish*;' it is manifest he has been already, and must continue to be, *disappointed*; as long as the smallest degree of misery is in his creation. And, yet, if
you

you be right, we cannot believe that he ever was, or ever will be, disappointed; because, you say, '*he chuses such means ONLY as are necessary to accomplish his end, and CANNOT fail in the application of them.*' For this reason, your assertions are unmeaning and useless: unless we can suppose a thing to be true and false at the same time. If this therefore be your grand argument, from the will of God, for ultimate happiness to *all* sinners, it must fall to the ground with its own weight. To talk of '*wishes*' in the Divine Being, is mean and unworthy: as though he were like his sinful creatures, *wishing* for what he could not obtain. Where is the creature that has an arm like God? Whose understanding and wisdom are superior to his? which yet must be the fact, if his will be frustrated. But, according to our maxim above, all '*events are necessary*;' and, therefore, it is evident that God never *designed*, or *wished*, the greatest possible happiness of his creation. Had he done so, who, or what, could have stayed his hand? All creation, as it came from his hand, was very good; and, in that state, happiness was enjoyed; but the introduction of sin, which marred that happiness, he willed or designed, or it had never been. This being once permitted, it will never more, as we know of, be extirpated from *all* the work of his hands. And, yet, without the greatest possible holiness, there never can be the greatest possible happiness. It is clear therefore that this happiness, '*in the whole of existence*,' was never intended, because it has not been possessed. And, it is equally clear, that the will of God is realized and explained in his works, and in the events which occur; for which reason there can be nothing inferred from the will of God to support the notion of ultimate happiness to devils and men.

Give me leave, sir, and I will offer you one thought, on this branch of the subject, which may not be altogether unworthy your notice. The *first*, or *ultimate* design of God, in all his works and ways, was, *his own glory*. This is secured; whether his intelligent creatures be happy or miserable. This happiness or misery being only a lower or secondary thought, if it be proper to speak so, in his deep adorable scheme of action. Creation and providence, sin and grace, in all the possible latitude in which they can be viewed, are but means leading on to that grand end. The end being fixed, you tell us, and it is a pleasing thought, that, he '*cannot fail in the application*' of the means. If it

was for his glory to will the introduction of sin, and the punishment of voluntary agents for sinning, of which there can be no doubt; then, no reason can be given why it may not be *equally* for his glory, and therefore the object of his will or intention, to continue that punishment as long as voluntary agents continue to sin. And, this, for ought appears to the contrary, will be for ever. It is safe for us to conclude, I think with you, that every event, past, present, and to come, exactly corresponds to his unchangeable, unfrustrable will; and, therefore, if there be misery in the creation *now*, of which every child of Adam is a witness, and this be according to his will; then, no argument can be formed, from the divine will, to prove that the *whole creation* shall ever be delivered from it. This is a profound and solemn reflection; but the ground on which it stands is sure for ever. So sure, that you must, if you wish to support your opinion, seek some better topic from which to reason in its defence. Now we come to examine

IV. *The divine perfections.* Nothing can be urged, with effect, from the perfections, which is incongruous to the will, of God. The perfections and will of the Supreme Being, are never but in the most absolute unison; both in their nature, objects, and operations. It has been said, (Month. Rev. Sept. 1784, art. 8.) ‘If we reason *a priori* on the attributes of deity, goodness, wisdom, and power, we must reject the doctrine of eternal punishment.’ But this is so far from truth, that just the reverse takes place, when the attributes of deity are properly understood. All the *conception* we can possibly form of these attributes *a priori* is simply this—That they are the attributes of an infinite, eternal mind. But, when we would ‘*reason*’ upon them we must have recourse to their manifestation. For, from hence *alone*, can our judgment of them, in this respect, be justly formed. And, here, nothing offers to consideration from which eternal punishment is to be ‘rejected.’ Let us begin with

Goodness. On this part of the subject you are pleased to say, ‘The doctrine of necessity enforces the belief of the greatest possible good to the whole system, *the goodness of God* admitted, and cannot well be reconciled with the everlasting misery of any.’ (v. ii. p. 126.) That necessity may be ‘*reconciled*’ with everlasting misery, has been shewn already; and the same will appear presently of the goodness of God. Would we persuade ourselves that we love our fellow

fellow men *better* than HE who made them? How *vain* the thought! How *ideal* the supposition! It is certain there have been, and will be, some of God's intelligent creation of whom the following scripture speaks an awful truth:—
 'It is a people of no understanding: therefore he that *made* them will *not* have mercy on them, and he that *formed* them will shew them *no favor*. Isai. xxvii. 11. The divine will is not controlled by goodness; but goodness is displayed according to the divine will. Though goodness, as an attribute of deity, be necessarily infinite, it is not so in the displays of it; for, were that the case, there could not possibly have been any misery, or partial happiness, in the creation of God. But, 'as Gods forbearing to create more worlds than he has, is no impeachment of his *omnipotence*; 'so, his forbearing to make all his creatures as happy as possible, is no impeachment of his *goodness*.' And, if it be consistent with his goodness, in harmony with his will and other perfections, to suffer misery in his creation for a moment, it will be *equally* so if misery be endured to all eternity. 'For, *misery*, though endured but for a moment, 'is, in its *own nature*, and for the *time being*, as *truly* misery, 'as it would be, if protracted ever so long. There is no way 'of asserting eternal providence, and of justifying the ways 'of God with men; but upon this grand datum: That the 'exercise of his infinite mercy or goodness is regulated by the 'voluntary determinations of his own most wise and sovereign 'pleasure. Allow but this rational, *spiritual*, (and, I should *scriptures* suppose incontrovertible) proposition; and every cavil, 'grounded on the chimerical unmercifulness' of eternal punishment, 'ceases even to be plausible.' The man who would reason with accuracy and propriety, from the goodness of God to the non-eternity of punishment, must reason in the following manner: viz. The attribute of goodness is an *infinite* perfection in deity—therefore there must be an *infinity* of creatures to be the *objects* of it—and these must *all* enjoy an *infinity* of happiness to confirm the exercise of it. And so of all the other attributes. But, as this would, in a most glaring manner, prove too much, it follows that all such reasoning is vain and inconclusive. An argument that proves too much destroys itself. After this let me name

Wisdom. This attribute of deity is the guide of the divine will, and of the divine arm; directing the acts of both to the highest and noblest end; *The glory of the Divine Character.*
 'In chusing *some* of the human race in Christ before the
 'foun-

‘ foundation of the world to grace and glory, he abounded towards *them* in ALL *wisdom and prudence*; having made known to them the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in himself.’ Eph. i. 4—9. If it be an *abundant* display of *wisdom* in the potter to form a certain number of vessels out of his lump of clay to *honor*; that is, to enjoy eternal salvation and glory—it is nothing less to form another certain number to *dishonor*; that is, to endure his just displeasure for their voluntary crimes for ever. These are the two parts of that ineffable plan of the holy will of God which *wisdom* ultimately directs to the glory of the Great Supreme. ‘ *The election has obtained it, and the rest are blinded.*’ Rom. xi. 7. On the one side, you see the certain everlasting salvation of the chosen; and, on the other, the certain everlasting misery of the finally impenitent: but not a word in favor of universal restoration. ‘ O the depth of the riches both of the *wisdom* and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!’ Rom. xi. 33. Where is the man who will charge the great God with FOLLY for chusing to express his righteous displeasure against the sin of voluntary agents; and, for continuing that displeasure while they continue to sin? And, yet, this ~~is~~ done by implication, when his *wisdom* is adduced as an argument to prove the ultimate happiness of *all* his creatures; because it does not appear that *wisdom* has appointed any means for their renovation. Without renovation there can be no restoration: unless we can suppose an *end* designed without *means* to accomplish it. It is a mark of no small precipitance and temerity to believe an *end*, for the compassing of which there are no corresponding *means*—or, an *effect*, for the production of which there is no appointed adequate *cause*. And, yet, this is precisely the case with an author who believes the doctrine of universal restitution. This doctrine strikes me as the *sole* production of depraved nature; and designed to set at nought and supersede the satisfaction of our great atoning sacrifice: but, while the gospel remains to be the revelation of God, it *must* be groundless and futile; because we are assured there, that ‘ Christ crucified is the power of God, and the *wisdom* of God.’ 1 Cor. i. 24. Now let us examine the attribute of

Power. Nothing, surely, can be produced in favor of the present question with less propriety, than the *power of God*. That the Lord is *omnipotent*, is a proposition universally allowed;

allowed; and, one would think, it should be as readily allowed that, he is NOT *omnipotent*. However, it may be easily proved, that his will is *not* governed by his power; but his power by his will and his wisdom. For instance, had it been his pleasure, he had *power* to have kept ALL the angels from rebellion as well as *some*; and so have prevented the introduction of moral evil. And, he had *power* to have saved *all* the human race with an everlasting salvation; had he chosen to do it. Those therefore who would mention the power of God, to any purpose on this subject, must first prove that he *wills* the restoration of angels and men; and then the work is done; for the rest will follow beyond contradiction. Give me leave, sir, and I will close this part with a few reflections on the attribute of

Justice. The display of this attribute is as essential to the glory of his government, as *holiness* is to his nature. It is *unjust* to withhold what is due; or to make the punishment exceed the crime. You refer, I suppose, to the exercise of this attribute, in the following words. 'The *just* ends of punishment are the *reformation* of the sinner, and the *warning* of others: and, all else is vengeance.' (ib. p. 65.) This assertion presumes upon several things which ought not to have been taken for granted, but proved: and yet which, in my opinion, never will be proved by any man. It is supposed here—1. That men are *naturally* inclined to avoid sin and delight in holiness, from beholding the punishment of others. Than which nothing is further from truth; as universal experience testifies. It is supposed also—2. That the suffering sinner is *changed* by his punishment: for, '*reformation*' does not reach the question. But the fallacy of this is shewn above. And—3. It is supposed, that, if these *two* ends of punishment be not answered, then punishment becomes '*vengeance*;' that is, if I understand you, it is unjust and cruel to punish a sinner, *as such*, if these ends be not *proposed* and *obtained* by the universal sovereign. But this is not true even among men. Human laws may be *intentionally* directed to these ends—let us suppose they are. Are the ends obtained? By no means. Yet, who will thence infer, that the execution of a felon is vengeance? that is, cruel and unjust. The executed felon cannot be changed, or even *reformed*, by his execution; nor does his suffering produce this effect in spectators. Nay, suppose, in human government, the execution of a felon always *reformed* the spectators; yet still it would not apply with effect to our present

present subject, because the case is not parallel; but, as it does not, it is the more foreign and unmeaning. Suffice it to say therefore, with the great apostle, 'Is God *unrighteous* who taketh *vengeance*? (I speak as a man.) God forbid: for then *how* shall God judge the world. Rom. iii. 5, 6. Again,

You chuse to say that 'The resurrection of Lazarus was *cruel and unjust*, if he was happy.' (v. i. p. 121.) When will vain man cease to censure that conduct of which he is *not* a judge! Could not the Lord easily conciliate the mind of Lazarus to a reunion of body and soul, for a season, that his great name might be glorified? Was not the happiness of Lazarus at the sovereign disposal of his adorable Savior? Was Lazarus injured by being raised from the grave? Did the Redeemer act out of character towards his friend Lazarus by this display of almighty power? Let the man, who is able, return an answer. The truth is, every thing must be sacrificed to our '*favorite system*.' That doctrine can never be of God, for the support of which the divine conduct must be charged with '*cruelty and injustice*.' When the Almighty rises up to judgment, *all* such doctrines will be treated as they deserve, for, 'he will be *justified* when he speaks, and *clear* when he judges.' Ps. li. 4. Rom. iii. 4. You yourself, sir, allow, that,

Though there be an '*impossibility* of acting well from a bad disposition or habit, yet that is *no* reason to forbear punishment.' (v. ii. p. 63.) This being the case, punishment is inflicted *justly* for voluntary crimes; and while the disposition remains bad and the actions voluntary, suffering for these actions and that disposition will be therefore *just*, upon your own authority; and one must run parallel with the other. If it be just for the judge of all the earth to inflict punishment at all, for sin committed; it will of course be just to render a state of punishment equal in duration to a state of sinning. If it cannot be proved that angels and men in future misery will be *so disposed* in mind, and *so act*, as to *satisfy* the law of God for past offences, and also *deserve* a return of his favor and smiles; every thing offered in support of universal restoration from divine justice, must be weak and empty. As human laws, strictly speaking, are not *honored* in the pardon of a criminal who had forfeited his life; so, the law of God is honored and magnified no other way but by perfect obedience to its commands, and enduring its penalty. Everlasting salvation, through the obedience

obedience and death of the Son of God, and eternal punishment, through the infliction of such sufferings as sin deserves; are *equally* the works of him, who 'is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' Ps. cxlv. 17. When we advance the justice of God in defence of the non-eternity of punishment, it is very clear that either we do not understand, or do not consider, the nature and tendency of our own reasoning. If we took up the matter properly, I have the vanity to think that we should soon be at a point, and dispute it no more. When we consider angels and men in a state of *creation*, we see they were holy and happy free agents. Was it *unjust* to make them so? Was the creator bound in *justice* to prevent their sinning? This idea will be enlarged in the next letter. And when we consider them as *fallen*, we see they are miserable free agents. Was not their sin *voluntary*? And is it *unjust* to punish a voluntary action, if criminal? The same argument that will prove the Supreme Judge *unjust* for continuing his displeasure against sin while it remains in his creation; will, with equal force, prove him unjust or cruel for shewing his displeasure against it but for *one moment*. I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

REVEREND SIR,

I HAVE reserved the next article to the last, because there is our only *authentic* evidence on this question. All that we can know, with certainty, concerning the *will* and *perfections* of God is told us there; and no where else but there. If we form our judgment by that standard we are right; if not, we err. And, this error has no remedy. We shall therefore carry our appeal

V. To *Revelation*. Necessity and suffering, with the will and perfections of God, are so far from proving the notion before us, that they confirm our faith in the everlasting damnation of sinning angels and men; and the undisguised suffrage of scripture declares the same solemn and important fact.

'The LORD hath made all things for HIMSELF: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.' Prov. xvi. 4. 'What

‘if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make ^{his} power known, endureth with much long-suffering the *vessels of wrath* fitted to destruction : and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the *vessels of mercy*, which he had afore prepared unto glory ?’ Rom. ix. 22, 23. This scripture testimony proves, if any thing needs proof, that the creation, the moral character, and the final states, of intelligent creatures, are the result of the divine will and wisdom ; ultimately directed to his glory. To this doctrine you accede with apparent satisfaction ; for, you say, ‘ The present and future destination of men is spoken of as *fixed* and *ordained* of God, as if he from the first intended that whatever *is to be, should be*, with respect to happiness or misery, here or hereafter. (ib. p. 133.) What a pity, sir, that we should, at any time, so much as seem to recede from a concession so harmonious with the records of truth ! And, yet, the ultimate happiness of *all* the intelligent creation cannot be advanced without it. But, it ought to be remembered, that scripture is not yea and nay, however learned men may be so. Our Lord says, ‘ What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and *lose* his own soul ? or, what shall a man give in *exchange* for his soul ?’ Matt. xvi. 26. By the *loss* of the soul is not meant an extinction of its consciousness ; but a deprivation of future happiness, and a keen sensation of divine displeasure. This *loss* being once sustained, it is irrecoverable for ever.

‘ There are no acts of pardon pass’d

‘ In the cold grave to which we haste ;

‘ But darkness, death, and long despair,

‘ Reign in eternal silence there.’ WATTS.

If there be elect angels and men ; and if they be chosen to salvation and eternal glory ; as the bible most expressly asserts ; it undeniably follows that there are some of each not chosen, but are left to reap for ever the reward of their own doings.

Every one is ready to allow that (על, אלו, אלוהים,) the terms which are generally rendered *eternal, everlasting, for ever, &c.* are used, at times, to signify a *limited and determinable* duration. But, sir, I cannot inform you by saying that this is not their most important meaning—for, were that true, they could only be applied in a secondary and inferior sense when used of the great and blessed God : which no sober reasoner would allow himself the liberty of supposing. However, I am far from insinuating that the same
eternity,

eternity, or eternity in the same sense, should be predicated of angels and men, as of the infinitely glorious Jehovah. Him I believe to be, in the most absolute sense, '*from everlasting to everlasting*;' Ps. xc. 2. but angels and men are only everlasting future—that is, from the time they began to be. That they are immortal in this sense, I think is clear; because, none but their creator *can* reduce them to a state of non-existence; and, because, there is no evidence whatever that he *will* do it. While therefore angels and men continue to exist, which will be for ever; they must exist, according to the scriptures, in a state of misery or of felicity. To prove, from the word of God, that there will be sinners in *everlasting misery*, I might wish you to read the prophet *Isaiab*: 'The sinners in Zion are afraid, 'fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites: who amongst us shall dwell with the *devouring fire*? who amongst us shall dwell with *everlasting burnings*? *Isai.* xxxiii. 14. I might name the testimony of the apostle *Jude*, who says that 'Sodom and Gomorrhâ, and the cities about them, are set forth 'for an example—*suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*' ver. 7. I might recommend to your serious regard the plain language of our Lord Jesus Christ, where he says, 'If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter 'into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, 'into the fire that *never shall be quenched*: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' &c. *Mark*, ix. 43, 44. And, in another place, he says, 'He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath *never forgiveness*, 'but is in danger of *eternal* damnation. *Mark*, iii. 29. But, I shall content myself with citing only one passage more; which, if not definitive, no more would *all* the bible. The final audit of men, and their ultimate states, the Great King himself declares in these words—'When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. And *these* shall go away 'into *everlasting punishment*: but the *righteous* into *life eternal.*' *Matt.* xxv. 31—33, 46. On which declaration from the tip of truth I beg leave to make this one remark. On the one hand, if *eternal life*, into which the righteous then shall enter, signify a state of felicity without end; then, by

parity of argument, *everlasting punishment* must mean an endless duration of the misery of the wicked. On the other hand, if a sinner may be delivered from the misery of hell; by parity of reason, a saint may be excluded from the abodes of bliss. For the reason why *that* is in hell and *this* is in heaven will remain, without change, as long as the eternal God himself shall *live*. This is my view of the question; and for these reasons, I think that revelation and your opinion cannot stand together.

Closely connected with this branch of the business is your account of the *introduction* of sin.—In this place, therefore, I shall subjoin a few thoughts on that matter. But when I behold your *end* of sin, I am not at all surprized at your idea of its *beginning*. Had I your views of things, I could not see how I could, with propriety, allow that a *sinner* existed in the empire of God. If your hypothesis be true, the supposed nature of moral evil must prove a fallacy; and the moral government of God be totally overthrown. This is my present apprehension. But let us see if I am right.

‘The *perfect* necessarian,’ you say, ‘cannot accuse himself of having done wrong, in the ultimate sense of the words—and therefore he has nothing to do with repentance, confession, or pardon.’ (v. iii. p. 301.) According to this language, there must arise a period in the creature’s existence, when it *will not* be true that he ever did wrong. But this is *deceiving* ourselves, and making God a *liar*. For the apostle John says, ‘If we say that *we have* no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say that we *have not sinned*, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.’ 1 John, i. 8, 10. From this positive testimony of God in his word, you scruple not to depart; and, virtually tell us, that there must be a time when sin will have lost its malignity, and the law of God its righteous demands on the rational creature; and, then, the creature will have outlived his dependence upon his creator and his obligations to him. Or, a time must come when God will either *approve* of sin, or have lost his *right* and *power* to punish it; and be therefore obliged, by nature or justice, or both, to pardon the sinner and make him happy for ever. But, if *ever* these things shall appear to be true, it is absolutely impossible to offer a reason why they should not be true *now*; and, if so, farewell to all moral and even natural obligation to the *great* God, for his dominion over his rational creatures must cease for ever; or, rather, in truth, never had a beginning. For
what

what is truth, at this hour, on this subject, will be so for ever; and, what will not be truth for ever, is not so at this moment. If therefore a *perfect* necessarian, or any creature, ever violated the holy law of God, it will be true, to eternity that he did it: and, if it be true *now* that sin renders the sinner obnoxious to punishment, it must be true *for ever*; because no possible duration can make a fact a falsehood, or change its nature. If death be the wages of sin *this day*, it will be the same in the *last day*; and, if a sinner be found *then*, under the weight of his guilt, so he will remain *through the whole of his existence*. Nothing therefore can be a greater deception, or more dangerous delusion, than supposing the truth of your assertion; for, as Dr. Price very justly observes, 'I think it impossible a doctrine should be *true* from which an apology for vice can be fairly deduced.' (ib. p. 354.) No apology for vice, surely can be bolder or stronger, one would think, than saying a sinner has nothing to do with pardon, in the last end of things. If there be no need of pardon, there can have been no offence. But, alas! who can tell the end of error? 'Let God be *true*, and every man a *liar*.' Rom. iii. 4. If any thing can exceed your former assertion I think it is the following; where you say, 'Upon the scheme of necessity the distinction between *things natural and moral* entirely ceases.' (v. ii. p. 115.) By which I perceive your necessity, sir, to be a stranger to *natural and moral evil*; and, consequently, to vice and virtue. For, when distinction *entirely ceases*, an universal sameness must prevail; so that there is no difference *now*, nor will there be *hereafter*, on your principle, 'between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.' Mal. iii. 18. As if the libertine, however, was not satisfied with the encouragement already given him, you advance further and say, 'The *vices* of men, under the common class of evils, producing misery for a time, are ultimately subservient to *greater good*.' (idem.) And, 'Good may result from *vice* to the whole system.' (ib. p. 116.) Have you not said, in the same page, that 'vice is the *greatest of all evils*; and CANNOT produce *good* but *evil* to us both here and hereafter, and *probably* will through the *whole of existence*?' Doubtless, sir, you can make these things agree, if I cannot. But, if what you say of vice be true, namely, that its ultimate tendency is *good*, and good to the *whole system*; then, one would suppose, the more vice the more good: that is, the more sin abounded, the more happiness would abound,

in the final state of things, even to the whole creation. How a *real* friend to virtue and revealed religion, or even the lowest good of civil society, can allow himself in such language, I must leave you to explain to us. But, my business is to prove that your assertion is false; that is, that good does *not* result to the whole system from vice. With that view I shall beg leave to examine what you chuse to say upon it.

‘Whatever terminates in good,’ you say, ‘philosophically speaking, is good.’ And ‘good results from vice to the whole system.’ Therefore vice is good. This seems to be your argument. If to speak philosophically be to speak justly and properly, then vice is no longer vice; for, as is the effect produced; such, in nature, is the cause producing—and, if the fruit be good, the tree must be good also. So that, if your argument goes to prove any thing, it is, that vice is in some sense praise and not blame worthy. ‘In this light,’ you say, ‘every thing may be safely ascribed to God.’ (idem.) As I purpose to prove, hereafter, that God is not the *author* of vice or sin, I shall now take it for granted; and assert that vice *ought not* to be ascribed to him. Every thing that God does is good; good in itself; and therefore cannot but be productive of good. But, sin never produced good, yourself the judge, to any part of the creation, much less to the whole system. That which is, in its own nature, evil, cannot be productive of good; and this you tell us sin is, if you have any meaning when you say, ‘it is the *greatest of all evils*.’ It is not in the nature of moral evil to produce good, in any sense of the word—*out of* that evil no good can possibly be brought. It may be *overruled* for good, in the ultimatum of things, and even in time—it may be, and is, a necessary part of the great scheme of heaven, or it had not been; and, as such, it contributes, but not *naturally* or *actively*, to the beauty of that plan which infinite wisdom laid, and in which the divine glory is revealed in the salvation of some and the perdition of others. In this view sin is overruled for good, in becoming the occasion, but not the cause, of our salvation. For, had not sin entered, Christ, as a Savior and Redeemer, had not appeared: but, no thanks to sin, for God’s unspeakable gift of his dear Son. Though it may be thus overruled for good, that will not justify the sinner; for, had sin been good, there could have been no cause of blame, nor need of salvation. ‘If evil had not been permitted, the wisdom
‘ of

‘ of God could not have appeared in *overruling* it ; nor his justice in *punishing* it ; nor his mercy in *forgiving* it ; nor ‘ his power in *subduing* it.’ Your ‘ view of *moral evil*,’ you say, ‘ though innocent, and even useful in speculation, no wise man would chuse to act upon it,’ (ib. p. 115.) But, really, sir, if you have given us a true state of the matter, I do not see why he should not. ‘ The limitation of his ‘ understanding’ should be no hindrance to his pursuing that path the termination of which is ‘ good to the whole system,’ because, such a noble end is, of itself, a sufficient reason to persuade him to persevere in it to the last. That God *sent* Joseph into Egypt—that he *designed* it for good—and that he *overruled* it for good ; no one denies. But, who will from thence conclude, that the conduct of his brethren was *good* ? You, yourself, allow it was *wicked* (ib. p. 187.) what ! *wicked*, and, yet, ‘ terminate in good ?’ How can this be, if we speak philosophically ! I wish to see this explained or reconciled. Nor did that *good*, for which their conduct was overruled, ‘ *result to the whole system.*’ The ‘ envy, hatred, and ‘ covetousness,’ of Joseph’s brethren, were carried to the highest pitch possible, in the betrayal and crucifixion of the Son of God ; and this ‘ terminated in the greatest good.’—But, was the conduct of Judas, the jews, and Romans, for that reason, philosophically speaking, *good* ? No, sir ; it was wicked—wicked beyond parallel. Does the good of that glorious and gracious event extend to the whole system ? Hell is a reluctant, but certain, and will be an eternal witness to the contrary. Hitherto I cannot see that vice is, in any possible view of it, to be considered as good, but evil ; and, as you say, ‘ *the greatest of all evils.*’ And, therefore, it appears, that, philosophically speaking, when vice is the subject, is neither wise nor just. If your following assertion be true, the noxious terms of *libertine* and *infidel* must be expunged ; for I do not see how *such* characters can exist.

‘ That God might have made all men *sinless* and *happy*,’ you say, ‘ might, for any thing that we know, have been as ‘ *impossible*, as his making them not finite, but *infinite beings*, ‘ in all respects *equal* to himself.’ (ib. p. 110.) Here, sir, your reader will surely conclude that you rise nobly superior even to yourself ! for, this is pleading the necessity of sin with a witness. But, is this the best way of accounting for the introduction of moral evil ? Far, very far from it, indeed ! And, one would suppose, that a wise and learned man,

man, one who had studied and defended christianity the greatest part of his life; must have seen, not only the *fallacy*, but the *absurdity* and *folly* of it. We know it was '*impossible*' for God to make '*infinite*' creatures, because, that implies a contradiction; but we do not know that it was impossible for him to make '*sinless* and *happy*' creatures, because, if he made any, as they came from his hand, they *could not* be otherwise. That is, they must be naturally and necessarily, as *his work*, both '*sinless* and *happy*.' The contrary would make God as much the *author* of sin as of life; and for the same reason: for, in that case, life and sin must both be derived *equally* from his pleasure, both be *equally* dependent on his power, and both be *equally* approved by his infinite purity—which is absolutely contrary to truth and justice.

1. To *Truth*. When the great God had finished his plan of creation, it is said, 'God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it *was very good*.' Gen. i. 31. Sin had not *then* stained any part of his creation. To assert, therefore, that sin is good is, so far, to assert, that wrong is right, and that truth is falsehood. The celestial spirits, who never sinned, are more than once called *holy* angels; which, on your declaration, could not be a true description: for, it is certain, they are not '*infinite beings*.' Holiness and happiness are inseparably united: where that obtains, this is necessarily enjoyed. The prophet Habakkuk, in his address to the Lord, says, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold *evil*, and canst not look on iniquity;' that is, with approbation. Hab. i. 13. Sin is that '*abominable thing* which the Lord *hateth*.' Jerem. xlv. 4. Nothing but sin is offensive to him. A plain proof this, that it is not the work of his hands. Were sin the creature of God, or were it a positive essential quality of the soul, it must have derived its being *immediately* from him, and be continually dependent on his supporting power for existence; but, as it is a departure from rectitude, and as such, expressive of a depraved mind, it cannot, in any sense, be attributed to the agency or energy of God, as an effect to a cause. The purpose, or will of God, concerning the *introduction* and *continuance* of sin, is as inviolably pure and holy, as though angels and men were lifeless statues; and, yet, the will of all intelligent creatures has ever been, and still is, as free from foreign force or compulsion, in every thought and act, as though there was no purpose in the will of God. Nay, the Lord did not only not *make* sinful beings, *as such*, but he cannot

cannot tempt, or seduce to sin. Hear the apostle. 'Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempteth he any man.*' Jam. i. 13. Besides, on your hypothesis, the chosen of God must be *physically* changed; that is, they must be dispossessed of their original mental faculties, and have new ones given them, before they can participate the holiness, or enjoy the happiness of the salvation of God: which is known to be contrary to truth and fact. Again,

2. Your declaration is contrary to *justice*. If a sinful disposition was united with our intellectual faculties, in the act of creation, as you seem to teach, then we must have sinned, from the beginning; as naturally and necessarily as we exerted our mental powers; and, therefore, every degree of pain and misery endured, must have been unjustly inflicted by the governor of the world. For, upon this supposition, it can be no more harm to sin than to think. But this conception of sin not only destroys the nature of vice and virtue, and subverts the moral government of God, but totally exterminates *all* religion from the face of creation. That noble descriptive language, which Moses uses of the great Jehovah, must fall before your philosophical necessity. Suffer me to lay it before you. 'He is the rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, *just and right is he.*' Deut. xxxii. 4. As this assertion, or your doctrine, must be rejected; I shall leave the reader to judge for himself. Nor does your apology for the introduction of moral evil, in the least relieve the difficulty. Nay, it seems rather to increase it. 'Our supposing that God is the *author of sin,*' you say, 'by no means implies that he is a *sinful being*, for it is the *disposition of mind*, and the *design* that constitutes the sinfulness of an action. If therefore, his disposition and design be good, what he does is morally good.' (ib. p. 117.) And, you say also, that, 'God may be the ultimate *cause* of a bad disposition, but, since he *produces* it from a good motive, in order to bring good out of it, he is certainly not vicious, but good, and holy in that respect.' (ib. p. 119.) A bad disposition, yourself the judge, is the necessary fountain of bad conduct; nor can the least moral good be brought out of it, according to the holy law of God: this part of your apology therefore comes to nought. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? *Not one.*' Job, xiv. 4. If sin be a moral evil, as all allow; and, if God be the *author* of it as you say; then it will follow that even God himself may '*do evil that good may come.*'

H

Rom.

Rom. iii. 8. Awful, however, as this inference is, I see no possible way to escape it, upon your supposition. No, sir, the the goodness of the *motive* will not justify the *action*. It is allowed that 'the motive or intention constitutes morality;' but it must be also granted that a person may be chargeable with sin where his motive is good. Witness Saul of Tarsus. The spring of his conduct, or his motive and intention, was zeal for God, and therefore good; but, will any say that therefore his persecuting conduct was good? In order to constitute a truly *moral good*, not only the motive or intention *in doing*; but also the thing itself *when done*, must be, properly speaking, good; and, that sin is not, either in its nature or effects; and therefore cannot be of God. Is it modest? Is it rational to suppose that the righteous Judge of all the world would punish his creatures for being *what he made them?* Infinity admits of no degrees. Creatures therefore can in *no respect* whatever be equal to their creator. Like him they may be, and are as hinted before, (R. p. 23, 24.) but, *equality* is absolutely out of the question. In this view of the case, there is no manner of difficulty in believing that God made his creatures '*sinless and happy*'—Nay, he could not possibly make them different. That God could not make immutable, independent creatures is very clear; for then they would have been equal to himself; yet it is as manifest that he made them holy and upright. So far they were *perfect*. But sin is a defect, a voluntary defect; and, therefore, could not flow from the same cause. Though they were created holy beings, yet even in that state, they needed super-creation strength to keep their holiness; as you see exemplified in the fall of angels and of Adam. Yet they did not sin by any *influence* from God, or external force; but as influenced by motive or voluntary choice. Had it not been so, their fall had been harmless and not sinful, and then their subsequent sufferings had been unjust. No person would attempt to prove that the sun is 'dark and cold,' because its absence occasions darkness and frost in the night; (*Edwards on the Will.*) and, yet, this would be as good reasoning as for a person to say 'if the Most High withhold the strength needful to 'prevent sin, then he is the *effective author* of it.' To name such an idea is to refute it. I readily allow, that 'God's withholding his special and extraordinary influence, is as much agreeable to his *will*,' as his imparting it; (ib. p. 123.) yet, his doing so, is by no means the *influential cause* of the conduct that follows, any more than the sun's absence is the cause of darkness. You are pleased to intimate that 'Mr. Edwards

‘ was not willing to encounter the difficulty of necessity in its ‘ greatest strength.’ (ib. p. 122.) But, really, sir, for my part, I do not perceive where he has *stopt short*. He has gone as far as a wise man *ought* to go; and, for aught I know, properly speaking, as far as he *could* go. He had no hypothesis to serve; his object was, simply, the illustration and defence of truth; and, he has acquitted himself like a man; but, more especially, like a man who knew his place and loved the truth. Does our espousal of necessity require us to believe that ‘ all ‘ events arise from preceding situations, and that the *original* ‘ situations of all things, together with the laws by which all ‘ changes of situation take place, were *fixed* by the Divine ‘ Being?’ (ib. p. 123.) No man, perhaps, held this sentiment firmer, or, properly considered, held it of more importance, than Mr. Edwards. But, he did not hold, that therefore ‘ there can be *no difference* whatever with respect to his *causation* ‘ of one thing more than another;’ (ib. p. *idem*.) because he could not *prove* it. Nor, am I yet convinced that any one else can prove it. If you can, please to do it, and it shall be regarded. For, if there be ‘ *no difference of causation*,’ it must follow of course, that vice and virtue, holiness and sin, happiness and misery, are only several terms for the same thing; and that *moral* qualities and dispositions *essentially opposite*, must flow from the *same moral* cause. ‘ Doth a fountain send forth at ‘ the *same place* sweet water and bitter?’ (James iii. 11.) ‘ Out of the mouth of the Lord proceedeth *not evil and good*.’ (Lam. iii. 38.) No doubt but there is a difficulty, *to us*, attending the introduction and continuance of moral evil—but, we had better let the difficulty remain in full force for ever, than assert that ‘ God is the *author of sin* as he is of *all things*.’ (ib. p. 117.) ‘ For then *how* shall God judge the world?’ Rom. iii. 6. Further; with a view to relieve the mind who may ‘ be ‘ alarmed at the idea of God’s being the *proper cause* of all ‘ evil, natural as well as moral,’ you say, ‘ upon any scheme ‘ that admits the divine *providence*, the *same consequences* ‘ follow. For still God is supposed to foresee, and permit, ‘ what it was in his power to have prevented, which is the very ‘ *same thing as willing and directly causing it*.’ (ib. p. 125, 126.) Not quite so hasty, sir; if you please. We may sometimes too soon jump to our conclusion. It is granted that sin is a necessary *consequent* of his will and his knowledge, but not therefore an *effect* of his *causation*, like the being of his creation; because this would prove that sin is an essential quality of the creature as he came from his maker’s hand, and not the result of his

own choice: which would involve the absurdities mentioned just before. God naturally and necessarily *loves* holiness—he as naturally and necessarily *hateth* sin—but, on your principles sin cannot be evil, and then he hates it without a reason; or, if he be the *author* of it, he hateth the work of his own hands. To finish the matter. You say, ‘To the Divine Being, who alone is perfectly good and perfectly happy, nothing is seen as an *evil*, but a necessary and useful part of a perfect whole; because his comprehension is infinite.’ (ib. p. 114.) If the Lord sees no *evil*, it is because there is none; for nothing can be concealed from his eye. True; the Lord has an all-comprehending mind—he laid out his great plan for his own glory—he has rendered all the events of time necessary for the accomplishing his stupendous design—and therefore, you conclude, he sees no *moral evil* in his empire! Is this the way you reason, sir? If there be a rule of action to intelligent creatures, which all must allow—if this rule be loved or despised, and it must be one or the other—the omniscient God must *see* and know these things; they are not creatures of our fancy; they are solemn realities; and you and I must bear witness one day to this all-comprehending knowledge of God in the face of all the world! And then we shall not find that the ‘infinite comprehension’ of the great I AM destroys the nature of moral evil; nor that he has never seen any in his creatures—but that ‘every work will be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, *whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*’ Eccles. xii. 14. Happy will the man be in that day, not who never sinned, for none such will be found; but to whom ‘there is no condemnation, being accepted in the ‘beloved.’ Rom. viii. 1. Eph. i. 6. May that unspeakable happiness be yours and mine.

No person, perhaps, loves the doctrine of necessity, when properly understood, better than myself, or would more cheerfully plead its cause; but when it is placed at the head of notions with which it has no connection, I am obliged to attempt to detect the fallacy. But it may be I have said enough on this subject: a subject which, in your view of it, can be no more supported by solid reason than it is by revelation. I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

L E T T E R V I I I .

REVEREND SIR,

HERE I begin to consider your account of *calvinism*. I shall include all I mean to say on this matter in two letters. You chuse to tell us you are 'very confident you do not 'misrepresent calvinism.' (ib. p. 159.) There is a sort of confidence never likely to convince an opponent of his mistake; and, if we had less of it, the defect would not diminish our happiness. I have not yet called Calvin, '*master*;' nor do I undertake to defend any position as *his*; but, if what he advanced appears to be the *truth of God*, let it be said by *Calvin*, or Dr. *Priestley*, no matter to me, I am alike willing to receive and defend it, *as such*. If you have 'not *misrepresented* calvinism,' of which the reader will judge, I flatter myself it will appear pretty evident that you need a little *instruction* on the subject. Accept therefore, sir, my offered service in that respect.

You say, 'I do not see what motive a calvinist can have to 'give any attention to his moral conduct.' (ib. p. 154.) As far as motive is concerned in moral conduct, a calvinist has an equal reason to regard it with a necessarian; perhaps more.—Does a necessarian admit 'the *previous state* of the mind, and 'the *influence* to which it is exposed?' (ib. p. 150.) So does the calvinist. And, on this principle it is, that the calvinist can account for the *sameness* of human action, in every age and clime, full as well as a philosophical necessarian. I said, perhaps, a calvinist has *more* reason to regard his moral conduct.—The electing love of the *Father*, the eternal redemption of the *Son*, the sanctifying and comforting agency of the *Holy Spirit*, the faithful *promises* of future bliss, with *peace* and *joy* in believing; comprize a part of the motives which a calvinist has to regard his moral conduct. Let philosophical necessity propose superior. That is, let it be proved, if it can, that the motives proposed by necessity are nobler in their *nature*, more friendly to virtue and goodness in their *effects*, more satisfactory to the mind when *felt*, or more suited to make the man *eternally happy*. If this can be done, I will thank you, sir, to see it. If not, the necessarian, with all his plausible motives to morality, must veil to the pre-eminence of practical calvin-

calvinism. The necessarian teaches that, 'every man is the *MAKER of his own fortune*,' and, that, 'in the most proper sense of the words, *it depends ENTIRELY on himself*,' 'whether he be virtuous or vicious, happy or miserable.' (ib. p. 99, 150.) So that, according to necessity, the *will of God* is quite excluded. If this doctrine be true, the providence of God, or the God of providence, are of no importance in the universe! What a strange idea for a defender of christianity!! But these bold and hasty assertions have been so often proved groundless by the sovereign hand of heaven, that it is sufficient only to name them. Who is it maketh poor, and maketh rich? brings low, and lifteth up? Are *all*, who are equal in diligence and skill, attended with equal success in business? Are those who are *born* to titles and estates, the *makers* of their own fortunes? Were the thief on the cross, and Saul of Tarsus, the *cause* of the change they felt when called from vice to virtue, from misery to happiness? Your language plainly shews us that the grand object of a necessarian, in attending to his conduct, is, the exaltation and glory of *all-important SELF*—whereas, the calvinist regards his conduct, that he may magnify the goodness of Him who gives him daily food; and 'shew forth the praises of Him who has called him out 'of darkness, into marvellous light.' 1 Pet. ii. 9. And, I can safely leave the reader to conclude, whether of the two be the most generous and most rational agent in this respect; the calvinist or necessarian. Again,

'If any system of speculative principles can operate as an 'axe at the root of all virtue and goodness,' you say, 'it is 'calvinism.' (ib. p. 155.) If this be a true state of the matter, then, certainly, calvinism *ought* to be banished from the earth as the worst of all that is bad. But, for the fallacy of this wild assertion, we appeal to the suffrage of universal observation—our enemies themselves being judges. Where shall we find the several tribes of the dissipated and secure? NOT amongst the calvinists. Where the ungodly and profane? NOT among the calvinists. Where the sons of plunder and Tyburn? NOT among the calvinists. Indeed there may be some *mere* professors among them—and under what description may there not? If the doctrine of calvinism have any bad effects, I will say as you do of necessity, 'it is a proof that it was never *clearly* understood.' (ib. pref. p. 24.) Or, if you had rather, I would say, in such case, it only floated idly in the *head*, and never reached to rule the *heart*. In the opinion of a calvinist, true dignity of character consists, not in earthly

earthly grandeur—polite literature—nor extensive worldly connections; though he has learned how to esteem the one and the other; but, in filling our relative stations with propriety, integrity, and uprightness, with a view to the glory of God. And here, the poor may be equal to the rich—the unlettered husbandman, to the most accomplished philosopher—and, the comparatively unknown, to those whose names are registered in the annals of fame. There may be as much true virtue in the lowest, as in the *highest* lines of life. Indeed, sir, I must beg your pardon, while I scruple not to avow, that such licentious tendency can never be found in the doctrines of calvinism, as in the language of the necessarian. The *former* believes, and teaches, that, ‘without holiness no man shall see the Lord;’ (Heb. xii. 14.) but the *latter* does not blush to assert that, ‘he cannot accuse himself of having done wrong in the ultimate sense of the words, and therefore has *nothing* to do with repentance, confession, or pardon.’ Who can believe and understand his bible, and yet say that calvinism has a licentious tendency? The matter is before the judge. The *general* principle of calvinism is expressed, by an inspired writer, in these words. ‘The acknowledging of the truth which is *after godliness*.’ Tit. i. 1. And, among the several *particulars*, let me name election; for, if this stands the test, the whole is safe from censure. ‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath CHOSEN us in him before the foundation of the world, that we *should be* HOLY, and without blame before him in love.’ Eph. i. 3, 4. ‘We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning CHOSEN you to salvation, through SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.’ 2 Theff. ii. 13. ‘ELECT according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through SANCTIFICATION of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.’ 1 Pet. i. 3. So far the apostles. On whose evidence we may very safely make this remark. It is impossible to prove that doctrine to be *unfriendly* to ‘virtue and goodness,’ much less ‘an axe at the root’ to *destroy* them; whose end is ‘holiness to the Lord,’ and that end sure to be *accomplished*. You are desired to review this part of the subject, sir; and see how it comports with your assertion; for both sides of a contradiction cannot stand. Every one knows that election makes an important figure in the scheme of *calvinistic doctrine*.—Every

one knows that its importance is not less in the grand scheme of *gospel grace*.—And, I might add every one knows it is the most unwelcome part of all.—But, while the eternal God tells us that *one* part of his design in choosing his people was their *holiness*, and consequently their happiness; and, while we see and know *this* part to be fulfilled; it will only confirm the truth to oppose it. The more truth is opposed, the more it is examined; and, the more it is investigated and understood, the more it is embraced and defended.

No doubt, sir, but we shall be always ready to return that 'kind of respect with which you feel yourself disposed 'to look on calvinists—' except when you assume the throne and declare that, 'there is often among them great malignity of heart *concealed* under all the external forms of devotion.' (ib. p. 163, 164.) There we must beg leave to let you go *alone*; because, as yet, we are not penetrating enough to enter men's hearts, and; because we are not allowed to judge another man's servant. If those who have the monopoly of charity and candor be thus highly honoured, we would not envy their prerogative. Let them use it *freely*. But, if, after all, the calvinistic doctrine be indeed thus malignant in its nature and tendency, and actually produces such sad effects; how is it that we have so seldom any proof of it? By what power is it controlled? Your information on this head will be thankfully received. Once more,

'Where a disposition to vice has pre-occupied the mind,' you say, 'I am very well satisfied, and but too many facts 'might be alledged in proof of it, that the doctrines of calvinism have been actually fatal to the *remains of virtue*, and 'have driven men into the *most desperate and abandoned course of wickedness*.' (ib. p. 162.) I am not obliged to take your *bare* word in this business.—If you are 'very well satisfied' of this matter, it is but reasonable that *others* should be so too; and, perhaps they may when they know on what your satisfaction is founded: for that reason, sir, I call upon you for the proof of your assertion. As you say 'many facts 'may be alledged in proof of it,' you can the more easily furnish *one*; and *one* I must insist upon having produced; because, till such evidence be brought forward, I must necessarily disbelieve and deny your assertion. Nor will you be offended if I reject all such sort of evidence as is not *in point*. In the interim, suffer me to observe, that it is impossible but the doctrines of calvinism, if properly understood and felt, must produce the opposite effects to those you mention.

mention. In proof of this, *two* * facts may be alledged, out of many. I mean the *extortionate* Zacheus, and the *dissolute* woman. Luke vii. 36. xix. 1. That 'dispositions' to vice had *pre-occupied* their minds' cannot be doubted; but when the Savior made them *experimentally* know 'the doctrines of calvinism,' or, which is the same thing, when he spake divine life to their souls, and imparted the blessings of pardon and peace; were 'the *remains* of virtue' destroyed? Were they not better members of society, and more upright worshippers of God? Let all the world judge! Nor can such a cause be unproductive of such *effects*. Moreover,

You tell us, 'The proper calvinistic system is a *most gloomy one*.' (ib. p. 161.) If, indeed, the calvinist has no motive to regard his moral-conduct—if calvinism be an axe laid at the root of all virtue and goodness—and, if it produce the dreadful effects named above—it must be a 'gloomy system' truly! But, as just the reverse of all this is clearly the fact, the charge of *gloominess*, like the other charges, becomes a mere unsupported assertion. It is not very doleful tidings to a guilty conscience to hear of free and full salvation in the blood of Christ for the chief of sinners! It is not very distressing to a sensible, penitent sinner to be told, on the authority of heaven, that the Lord has mercy on whom he will have mercy—that the pardon of sin is freely bestowed through the sacrifice of Jesus—that God justifies the ungodly through the imputed righteousness of his Son—that whosoever will may take the water of life freely—that the vilest of sinners have been saved at the eleventh hour—and, that if God be for us, none can be against us! I say, this is not very gloomy doctrine to Adam's guilty sons—and, yet, this is calvinism. Or, if you please, it is the glorious gospel of Christ. Is it therefore a 'gloomy,' the 'most gloomy system?' The truth is, it throws the merit of the creature into shades—annihilates it altogether—and teaches him to ascribe the whole of his salvation to rich and sovereign grace. To the self-righteous it *must* be a gloomy system indeed, because it utterly takes away his gods; and then, poor thing, he has nothing left. But, in the esteem of a believer, it is the wisdom of God and the power of God. Let us compare this same gloomy system with philosophical necessity; and we shall see which exceeds.

On the principles of the necessarian, *all late repentance* is altogether and necessarily *ineffectual*. So that the dying penitent is sure to fall into future misery, because he did not repent sooner, and being in misery, there philosophical
I necessity

necessity leaves him, notwithstanding he died a penitent.— However, this is not the doctrine of God's everlasting gospel; for, had that been the case, we had never heard of the salvation of a bloody Manasseh, nor an executed thief. What a welcome message to a convinced, dying sinner is the overflowing fulness of our adorable mediator; who is exalted to *give* repentance and forgiveness of sins! It affords him such peace and joy in believing, that he longs to be forever with the Lord. On the other hand, to tell a dying sinner that his repentance is *too late*—he has not *time* to reform his life—he must go to hell—what a *contrast*! Indeed, if we take up repentance in the light in which you represent it, we may peremptorily assert it would have been too late in any time *past*, and ineffectual in any period *future*—but the reader will perceive that I consider it in a very different view; and, therefore, if calvinism and necessity be set over against each other, the *real* impenetrable darkness of *this*, will make the *pretended* gloom of *that* appear meridian day! What, cannot God display the riches of his grace on a dying bed! in a dying hour! Yes sir; he *can* do it—he *has* done it! However, this is not asserted to indulge, nor is it calculated to promote, presumption in principle, nor licentiousness in conduct. Nor will those who *know* the truth take it in that light. For, as a worthy author once said, 'Though there was *one* thief saved, that no dying penitent might despair, yet there was *but one*, that none might presume.' This being the true state of the matter it appears that necessity, and not calvinism, is the '*most gloomy system*.' In another place you assert that,

'The calvinistic system intirely excludes the *popular notion* of free-will, viz. the liberty, or power, of doing what we please. And in this respect it is that the language of scripture cannot be reconciled with the tenets of calvinism.' (ib. p. 158.) If by 'the popular notion of free-will' be meant that notion of it which robs the Lord Jesus Christ of the glory of being a Savior, and which supersedes the agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification; then, indeed, calvinism does '*exclude*' it, and, ever must. Nor will any system patronize it, but such as wishes to give all the glory to SELF of what we *do*, and what we *have*. Does calvinism say that a natural unregenerate man *does not*, *cannot*, will to love God, and delight in his law and his gospel? So says the scripture. 'The carnal mind is *enmity* against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Rom. viii. 7. 'The natural man *receiveth not* the things

* things of the Spirit of God ; for they are *foolishness* to him ;
 * neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually dis-
 * cerned.' 1 Cor. ii. 14. A man cannot will to love and
 hate the *same object*, at the *same time*. It is impossible to esteem
 the things of the Spirit of God wise and foolish *together and*
at once. On this account the language of calvinism and
 scripture is perfectly one. And, yet, the calvinist believes
 ' the liberty or power of doing what we please ;' or he could
 not believe his bible. However, the liberty or power of
 doing what we *please*, and what we *ought*, are so very different,
 that they should never be confounded. The *first* is allowed ;
 the *last* is denied. The following passage exemplifies the
 matter. ' I will chuse their delusions, and will bring their
 ' fears upon them ; because when I called, none did answer ;
 ' when I spake, they did not hear : but they did evil before
 ' mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.' Isai.
 lxvi. 4. Thus speaks the word of truth ; and thus the cal-
 vinist believes. For this reason, sir, it is very evident that
 ' the language of scripture and the tenets of calvinism' can
 be happily ' reconciled.' I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

REVEREND SIR,

ONE false step, you know, will sometimes lead on to
 many others. So here. If our idea of man's free
 agency be false, it is natural to expect that every thing
 connected with it, or built upon it, should be the same.
 I suppose this will be realized in the contents of this letter.

' Scripture expostulations,' you say, ' have the greatest
 ' propriety on the scheme of necessity, which supposes a
 ' necessary and mechanical influence of motives on the human
 ' mind ; but can have no propriety at all with respect to
 ' men who are so far *dead in sin*, as to be incapable of being
 ' excited to virtue by any motive whatever.' (ib. p. 158, 159.)
 What a *strong* sentence ! and how *weak* the authority on
 which it stands ! The calvinist believes men to be truly
 rational beings ; but, if the necessarian will not, who can
 help it ? As rational agents they are governed by motives,
 and by motives only ; or they might as well be statues as
 men.

men. Does the necessarian presuppose the state of the mind to the operation of motives? So does the calvinist. *Death in sin* therefore is the reason offered why the man *is* not, and why he *cannot* be, governed in his moral conduct by love to God and delight in him. On this very ground, were the necessarian consistent with himself all through his scheme, he would read with conviction and approbation the following text. 'You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.' Eph. ii. 1. If the previous state of the mind be admitted to the influence of motives in *one* instance, no sober reason can be given why such a concession should not be *universal*; and, yet, man is a free agent, though dead in sin, because he is governed by motives. Or, in other words, he *chooses* his own ways, and can give a reason for what he *does*. Who is it teaches us that a man eats apples rather than peaches, as certainly and necessarily as gravity causes the falling of a stone? It is the necessarian. What is the reason given for this certain and necessary preference of apples to peaches? It is because the man is governed by his *affections*, or he has a predilection in favor of apples. (ib. p. 27.) Here, sir, you are quite one with the calvinist; from whom you seem to affect such a distance. For, it is on this same principle, *precisely*, that the calvinist, or, if you had rather, the Lord Jesus Christ, says, men *prefer* darkness to light. Let us read the text. 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men LOVE darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' John iii. 19. Here we have the previous state of the mind, the influence of motive, and the choice corresponding to that state; and, in both, a proof that man, however sinful, is, notwithstanding, a free agent. If you mean by 'virtue' offices of kindness from man to man, those who are dead in sin may be 'excited by motives' to perform such offices; and are so day by day: but, if it be designed to express any acts of spiritual worship and vital religion, and *this only* reaches our question, these actions will never be performed, the necessarian being judge, till the previous state of the mind and the view of objects be changed; and this change will never take place till the *dead* sinner be made *alive*: and, no power short of divine energy, exerted by the Holy Spirit of God, can possibly produce it: if you can prove the contrary, sir, I invite you to do it; if not, you know the consequence. Your language proves the thing you deny. Yet, still, if men were not free agents, or did what they '*pleased*,' there would

would be neither religion nor irreligion in the world. The necessarian, the calvinist, and the bible, you observe, have here the pleasure to agree; and why should they not *always* agree?

‘Mechanical influence of motives on the human mind—
 ‘the proper mechanism of the mind, depending on the influence of motives!’ I think you should have explained this language. The influence of motives on the human mind, I allow, is as certain and invariable as that of gravity on the falling of a stone; (ib. p. 27.) but not by the same law. For, were that the case, the stone and the human mind must agree in the *morality* of their motions: that is, there would be *no* morality in the motions of either. As ‘the *motive* or *intention* constitutes morality;’ (ib. p. 119.) and, as there is no motive or intention in the motion of a falling stone; the law by which a stone necessarily falls, and that by which the human mind necessarily acts under the influence of motives, must naturally and essentially differ: or, all morality must be out of the question. If ‘man be no more the cause of his actions than a magnet is of attracting iron;’ (vol. iii. p. 380.) then, of course, a man and a magnet are both equally distant from morality of conduct. There is neither vice or virtue in either of them. On this principle, there is as much sacred devotion in the motions of a parcel of needles on a pewter plate, when attracted by a magnet, as in a congregation of intelligent creatures in the highest acts of solemn worship. Or, in short, in the perfect praise of the heavenly world. Is this a *defence* of christianity? The mechanical influence of motives! The proper mechanism of the human mind! (v. ii. p. 157.) By this language one would suppose that our several mental faculties (which, I apprehend, are only different modifications of the same power) were comparable to the several parts of a well-constructed machine, a clock, or a windmill, for instance; and that the motives operated on our minds, as does the wind on the wings of the mill, or the weight on the wheels of the clock! The certainty of the operation to produce the event has been granted; but if, as I said before, the *principle* or law of motion be the *same*, we may as properly ascribe virtue or vice to a windmill, or a clock, as a man. You say, ‘Motives have a certain and necessary influence on our minds;’ (ib. p. 79.) granted: but prior to their operation, must they not be understood? If this be not necessary, I may as well be governed by what I reject, as what I receive
 —by

—by what I do not understand, which to me is *nothing*, as by what I clearly perceive and know. If this be allowed, we are just the same rational agents as clocks and windmills; if it be disallowed, the laws of operation cannot be the same; and, consequently, it is not proved that motives act by a *mechanical influence*; but the reverse.

You also tell us, that 'The proper laws of nature are violated in regeneration.' (ib. p. 157.) This assertion assumes what *we* deny, and what *you* have not proved; namely, that *all* the laws of the universe are mechanical laws. But, as this is not the truth, whatever 'divine interposition' there may be in regeneration, or upon any other 'occasion with reference to the elect,' or non-elect; it is manifest the Lord may dispose the minds of his creatures for the purposes of his glory, without '*violating* the laws of nature.' Were not this to be done, then, either the Creator must have formed creatures not subject to his control, or there could be no moral agency. If there be an alternative, be so obliging, sir, as to point it out. Should it be said—'The Lord governs the several parts of his creation by laws which he originally instituted and impressed'—This would be allowed. But still the difficulty remains. The laws by which the rational, the animal, and the inanimate branches of creation are governed, are *specifically* the same, or they are not. If they be the *same*, there can be no more morality in one part than another. The sun in shining, the fire in burning, the tide in ebbing and flowing, would be equally moral agents with angels and men. But, if they are *different*, it is but reasonable to believe that the laws impressed on each part of the creation correspond to the *natures*, and the Creator's *design* in forming every branch of the great whole. I do not question the constancy or certainty; that is, the necessity of any event; I only plead the propriety, the wisdom, and the absolute necessity of different laws of government. Which difference *must* obtain, or man cannot be a *moral agent*; because, in that case, he would not be a *voluntary* one. Every one knows that the natural tendency and influence of mechanical laws is invariably *uniform*—but, where is the proof of such *sameness* in human conduct? One man is a spendthrift, another a niggard—one is full of levity, another a student—one a lover of pleasure, another a lover of God—yea, the conduct, and the motives of conduct, in the same man may be changed.—All which may very easily be accounted for on the consideration of '*the previous state*'

'state of the mind, and the different views of objects;' but must forever remain a problem, if morality be admitted in human conduct under '*the mechanical influence of motives.*' To call the power by which 'the new birth' is produced, or by which any after act of grace is displayed, 'a miraculous interposition;' (ib. p. 152.) is as totally foreign from true philosophy, as it is inimical to true divinity. Because, you know, the *natural* and *moral* world, not being the same, should not be blended together; and, it is in *that*, not *this*, that *miracles* are performed, or the laws of matter and motion interrupted in their wonted regularity. If the new birth be the implantation of new life by the eternal Spirit, you will ask—'Why then do you preach, exhort, and reprove?' The answer is this. Men, though sinful and fallen, are yet rational creatures. As such they are governed by motives—motives addressed to hope and fear. These are found in the word of God; they have been sanctified, or rendered effectual by the Spirit of God, to the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints; and therefore are to be freely used as opportunity offers or need requires. As Paul said to his son Timothy, 'Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with long-suffering and doctrine.' 2 Tim. iv. 2. Whatever the Lord *commands* his creatures to do is sin to *omit*. Whatever he *forbids* is a crime to *do*. And upon this principle it is that all the '*exhortations*' of scripture are founded; and, man being a rational voluntary agent, they are used with propriety; whereas, were he a mere mechanical being, you might as well exhortate with a wheelbarrow as a man. When these things are duly considered, it will appear that a calvinist and a necessarian may allow men to have a power of doing what they please, that scripture '*exhortations*' are to be received, and that it becomes a minister to use them as he finds them in the bible, without believing the *mechanism* of the mind, or the *mechanical influence* of motives. If you would allow yourself the liberty, sir, of reflecting *cogly* and deliberately on *natural* and *moral* necessity, as distinct in their institution, ends, and subjects, I think you would cheerfully lay aside your present conceptions of things; and yet be able to maintain, with solid arguments, the rationality and moral agency of man, though he be still a subject of necessity. But, as you chuse to throw this distinction aside, and consider the whole as a piece of mechanism, and governed by the laws of mechanism; moral agency, and consequently vice and virtue, must be annihilated from the face of the earth. I by no means think that

all/

that this conclusion meets your *design*; but, I apprehend, nothing can be plainer than that it is the natural and unavoidable conclusion of your *doctrine*.

Original sin is also denied by you. 'The necessarian,' you say, 'believes nothing of the posterity of Adam sinning in him; and of their being liable to the wrath of God on that account.' (ib. p. 155.) I should much rather have heard you say the reverse of this; because, by disbelieving this doctrine, you leave out of your creed one of the most demonstrable *facts* that can exist. A fact, by the denial of which, you most evidently, though undesignedly, confirm. How the contamination flows from the fountain to the streams, I do not undertake to say; but the *fact* is established beyond all reasonable doubt. However, I have nothing to add, on this subject, to that truly masterly performance by the late worthy Mr. Jonathan Edwards, entitled, 'The great Christian Doctrine of ORIGINAL SIN defended.' I have never yet heard of any one who even *animadverted* upon it, much less *answered* it. While such a book remains unnoticed, it is hardly just or even generous to *yourself*, to be so *desided* on the question. Your saying the necessarian does not '*believe*' it, will have but little weight indeed, with a truly unprejudiced enquirer, towards proving that it is *not* a christian doctrine; because the authority of a necessarian against the word of God, is of no more importance than that of other men. While this doctrine is rejected, christianity, however '*studied*,' is not clearly understood; much less embraced; least of all '*defended*.' Permit me therefore, sir, to recommend this book to your serious perusal; and, if you find the evidence defective, or the reasoning inconclusive, do the religious world the favor to shew them their error in receiving it. The work is well known, well received, and in many hands; which are my *only* reasons for saying no more upon it. I shall present you with Mr. Saurin's opinion on the subject, and dismiss it. 'Suppose the scriptures had not spoken expressly on the subject of *original depravity*, yet it would argue great stupidity to question it. As soon as infants discover any signs of reason, they discover signs of depravity, and their malice appears as their ideas unfold themselves. Sin in them is a fire at first concealed, next emitting a few sparks, and at last bursting into a great blaze, unless it be prevented in time. Whence do they derive so great an infection? Can we doubt it my brethren? They derive it from us, and by communicating
our

' our nature we communicate our depravity. It is impossible, ' being our children, that they should not be depraved, as we ' are, for, to use the language of scripture, their *fathers are ' Amorites and their mothers are Hittites.* Ezek. xvi. 13.' Robin'son's Translation, Vol. V. Serm. 1.

Perseverance is likewise rejected. ' The necessarian believes ' nothing,' you tell us, ' of all the actions of men being neces- ' sarily sinful; but, on the contrary, thinks that the very worst ' of men are capable of benevolence and worthy intentions in ' many things that they do; and likewise, that very good men ' are capable of falling from virtue, and consequently of sink- ' ing into final perdition.' (ib. p. 156.) You had told us before, that, there is an ' *impossibility* of acting well from a bad dis- ' position;' (ib. p. 65.) and now you say that ' *all* the actions ' of men are *not necessarily sinful.*' You have therefore to prove that an unregenerate man has a *good disposition*; that is, in a moral and spiritual sense; or it will unavoidably follow that ' *all* the actions' of such a man are ' necessarily sinful.' And, in order to this proof, you must shew us that a natural man has a holy delight in God, in the law, and in ~~the~~ gospel; which is as manifestly contrary to the testimony of *experience*, as it is to the *word of God*. But, till that proof be produced, it will be very clear that a necessarian believes without evidence, in believing that *all* the actions of unregenerate men are *not* necessarily sinful. Pray, sir, what are we to understand by your term ' *virtue*?' If relative beneficence, external civil deportment, and a form of religion be all your meaning, the calvinist believes, with the necessarian, that such a character may ' fall ' from his *virtue* into final perdition.' And both have their faith confirmed by reading the bible. ' When the righteous ' turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *he ' shall even die thereby.*' Ezek. xxxiii. 18. In this instance also you will please to observe that calvinism and the scriptures can be reconciled; not in *words* only, but likewise in *sense*. If by ' very good men' you mean truly regenerate men (and nothing less than this affects the calvinist), such as are ' clothed ' with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of ' righteousness;' Isai. lxi. 10. such as are ' blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;' Eph. i. 3. such as are the ' sheep of Christ the chief shepherd.' If this be your meaning, it is possible you may not be aware of what you have said; nor the event of your favorite theme as connected with it. For, by this language you destroy the groundwork of your universal restoration—leaving ' *final perdition*' and

final happiness cannot stand together in the same persons, unless they mean the same thing. And, you also *forget*, that I may not say *deny*, the most express declarations of the good shepherd, on this very pleasing subject. 'I give unto my sheep eternal life, and *they shall never perish.*' But if they 'sink into final perdition,' they must perish; and therefore I would hope that you will not *set up* your creed in direct opposition to the *veracity* of the Son of God; but cheerfully bow to the evidence of truth, and recollect with pleasure that he says, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY words shall not pass away.' Matt. xxiv. 35. Were you a scripturist, you could not well help being a calvinist; because on these noble subjects, what one freely and fully reveals, the other affectionately receives. But, I apprehend, the true secret is this. No *arminian* can cordially embrace the doctrines of *calvinism*; for which reason, it is not uncommon to see the word of God opposed, at the time it is professedly regarded.

Much do I approve, sir, of your opposition to a 'SELF-determining power in man,' *as such*, because, as you justly observe, 'the thing is impossible and absurd,' (ib. p. 89.) But, have you not evidently gone over to the other extreme, by reducing the whole business of volition and action to *mechanical influence*? You know who said, 'it is safest to walk in the middle way.' And, also, while you have opposed the doctrine of *self-determination*, you have perhaps, unawares, laid yourself open to opponents on that subject, were they disposed to urge you assertions against you. When an author tells the world that 'every man is the *maker* of his own fortune, that it depends *intirely* on the man himself whether he be virtuous or vicious, happy or miserable.'—Such an author is most clearly an *arminian*. Or, if you please, such language asserts, by the most express implication, that the present and future happiness of the creature is at his own disposal. Than which nothing is farther from fact—than which nothing can be a stronger buttress to a self-determining power. So that you are inconsistent with yourself. Why is not *every man* possessed of an *equal* fortune? Why is not *every one* as exempt from misery and as happy as he would be? Please to reflect upon these queries, sir, and favor me with an explicit answer. By these few hints the reader will easily see whether you have 'misrepresented *calvinism*;' or the contrary. I am, &c.

LETTER X.

REVEREND SIR,

I AM now come to that part of my plan which more immediately respects your opinion of *matter* and *spirit*. And here it may be needful to begin with the *divine nature* or essence. For, if it should appear that the Deity is a material being, we may the more easily credit the materiality of man; but, if the evidence should be such as to prove that '*God is a spirit*,' John, iv. 24. and not in any sense matter, we may, and ought, the more strongly to conclude that the soul of man is a spirit also: for he was made in the image of God. (R. p. 19, 23.) When philosophy undertakes to instruct in matters of religion; it soon discovers its incapacity for the office it assumes. This is the province of revelation; and of revelation only. For this reason a 'wayfaring man, though a fool, never errs therein:' Isai. xxxv. 8. and, for this reason it is that philosophers, however wise as *philosophers*, are continually opposing each other. It is impossible that the religion of philosophy can ever be established, while philosophy itself, like the moon, is constantly changing its face. However, as religion is mentioned in connection with your system, I shall employ a minute to consider it in that view.

When you assert that 'the object and end of all speculation is *practice*,' and that 'religious opinions are not worth contending for, but as they influence the heart and life;' (v. iii. p. 8. introd.) you express the sentiments of all wise and good men. But if it be 'of no consequence in the world to any *purpose of religion*, whether the soul of man be material or immaterial,' (v. i. p. 132.) it is too insignificant to justify, one would suppose, all that labor and zeal which you have discovered in the business. That which is 'of NO consequence in religion,' in that respect, is equivalent to nothing; and, being nothing, it can neither '*influence* the heart nor the life;' and, therefore, is '*not worth contending for*.' But, had you really thought so, you could have saved yourself much trouble and time to have bestowed another way. I shall leave you to say how an author must appear to his readers who contends for that which is, *confessedly*, of no importance.

K 2

You

You are pleased to assert (ib. p. 147.) that 'the arguments for the being and attributes of God stand precisely on the same footing on the material or the immaterial system, except the single article of materiality and immateriality itself, which relating to the essence of the Deity only, is no attribute that any way respects us, and cannot in the least contribute to heighten, or to lessen, our love and reverence for him, our obligations to obedience, or our submission to his will.' I must beg leave to observe here, that if the *same* ends of religion are to be attained, whether our mind, or the divine mind, be material or immaterial; to what purpose is all that is said upon the question? Why was it brought forward to public notice? All must be labor *lost*, and time *mis-spent*. But, in our progress, it will appear to the reader, I believe, that, upon this hypothesis, religion is without an object, and without a reason; and, consequently, can have no being in the universe. For a *material* object of worship, and *material* worshippers, is such language as can by no means convey a meaning. Besides, if 'the arguments for the *being* and *attributes* of a God stands *precisely* on the same footing, whether his *essence* be material or immaterial;' then, it is safe to assert, not only that matter is infinite, eternal, and independent; but also, that omnipotence and omniscience are to be attributed to matter—that matter may be a creator—and, that there is no *natural* or *essential* difference between the creator and the created; they being only several parts of one great whole. It is allowed that one part of matter cannot be another, or that two parts cannot be one, as the *watch* and the *maker* of it, in your instance, ib. p. 148. yet still, if your assertion be true, all the difference between the *maker* and the *made* can only be in *circumstance*, not in *nature* or *essence*. This may not be expressly Spinoza's language, but it seems to be evidently his sense. It signifies but *little* to say 'the divine essence is nothing that was ever called matter;' (ib. p. 152.) because, if the proof of his being and attributes depends *precisely* on the same arguments whether his essence be material or immaterial, there must be the same reason for calling his essence matter as spirit. It is the part of sophistry to change the *name* while we keep the thing. And it signifies still *less* to say that the nature of deity is 'some-what *essentially* different from matter, and has properties most essentially different from every thing else; (ib. p. 152, 107.) while you allow the same attributes to be predicated of matter as of spirit: and, also, grant that religion cannot be affected by it, whether the object of it be a material or immaterial being.

being. Nor does it in the least relieve the difficulty to say that 'it is not the *substance* of deity, of which we have no 'ideas at all, but the *properties* that are the object of our 'contemplation and regard;' (ib. p. 109.) because, if the substance and its properties may *naturally* and *essentially* differ, we are left in worse than Egyptian darkness, and have no *certain* rule of reasoning on any subject whatever. If I am not mistaken, therefore, you must either change your ground or give up your point. Again,

You tells us, 'In the same manner it might be shewn, 'that the argument for a divine *providence* suffers no injury 'whatever by this hypothesis.' (ib. p. 151.) On which I would remark thus. 'If the argument for a divine *providence* suffer no injury,' whether the nature of God be material or immaterial; then we may believe that unerring wisdom—irresistible power—perfect justice and goodness—which are displayed in Jehovah's extensive empire and government; are as truly predicated of matter as of spirit. Surely, sir, you will correct your premises, when you have considered their native conclusion. I have mentioned these hints just to shew the inaccuracy, the fallacy, not to say the absurdity of your reasoning. Perhaps the reader may think that I have made the *worst* of your language, or taken the advantage of a *hasty* expression; but, I apprehend, he will change his mind on reading your following words. 'I have shewn,' you say, 'that the belief of 'all the attributes of the Deity and his providence is compatible with ANY *opinion* concerning his essence.' (ib. p. 152.) But, sir, allow me to observe, that, argue as you please, it appears clearly that the divine essence, whatever it be, *must* come into the question, as well as his being and attributes; unless you will allow that his attributes may *naturally* differ from his essence. For my part, I think your language seems to aim at a distinction without a difference. I cannot separate, even in idea, his attributes from his essence. What is *omniscience*? It is *God* knowing all things; for 'his understanding is infinite.' Ps. cxlvii. 5. What is *omnipotence*? It is *God* able to perform whatever he wills; for he is 'the Lord God omnipotent.' Rev. xix. 6. And so of all the rest. Matter, in its very nature and essence, is unintelligent and unactive. Not so, the nature of God: for, had that been the case, intelligence and motion had never existed. Matter may be changed, and is passive in all the changes it endures—God is the same, and changes not. 'Matter cannot review its own existence; but God
' can

‘ can understand and review himself, and all things else in his vast universe.’ If there be such a thing in the universe as *matter*, and you seem to think there is nothing else, it must have been eternal and uncreated; or it must have created itself; or have been created by a being who is superior and prior to it. If the *first* be granted the consequence is manifest; and shall be considered, God willing, when known. But, if the *last* be allowed, it follows of course that the divine essence must be naturally and necessarily immaterial; and in no sense matter. ‘ There is not by far so much power manifested when matter has the manner of existence changed by motion, as is manifested in the simple existence of it. And, could this thing exist without power exerted: that is, without an *active cause*; that is, without having been *passive* in the very production? Observe, it is contradictory to say matter exerted this power itself: allowing that now it has a power, this is a power exerted previous to its having any; it is a power exerted in order to its *very existence*: it could not exert a power before it existed. And since matter itself is not this *determining*, this *operating*, this *powerful principle*, is not the existence of an *immaterial being* necessary to give it its first existence?’ From the existence of matter, let us proceed to that of *truth*. I mean *physical truth*. This is allowed to have a *necessary* existence. But, what ‘ makes the nature of truth necessary? This puts us to a stand, and engages us to consider, that truth is not a thing existing by itself. Its necessity therefore must be owing to something existing by itself. This puts us again upon considering that truth is only certain knowledge, and knowledge has a necessary relation to a knowing or intelligent being. If we could suppose *no intelligent thing* existing, truth, or knowledge, would be an *eternal property without a subject*; which is impossible and repugnant: or otherwise *truth would cease*, be only a chimera, and no way necessary.’ Thus, sir, if there be any reality in *religion*—if there be any such thing existing as *matter*—and, if there be such a thing as *truth*, there must be a necessary, eternal, and intelligent being, whom we call GOD—or the nature and essence of deity must be truly and properly immaterial; and the term material *ought*, in every sense, to be excluded from our conceptions of him, and language about him.

It is granted that, amongst the several classes of mankind, you will find some who have not *time* for close thinking, and others who have not a *disposition*. Some are *self-taught*; and, being

being arrived at their zenith, they can instruct every one else, but have nothing to learn themselves. Others are so *credulous* that, whatever a learned man may happen to assert, they receive for truth; and so sit down in peace. Examining a proposition requires a *little* labor, but they have none to bestow upon it; being willing to see with *other* men's eyes. And others, again, acquit themselves of all blame for mistake and ignorance, by supposing that truth does not exist, and especially religious truth; because the world is *not all of one mind*. From hence it is easy to apprehend some false notions may obtain on such sublime and exalted subjects. But, would any one, on that account declare, 'That the *materiality of the divine NATURE* is not a dangerous hypothesis?' (ib. p. 153.) The less mankind *think*, the more solidly and accurately those should reason who undertake, or who wish, to be their instructors. Especially on a subject so important and interesting as the *nature* of our great Creator. I have mentioned this idea before. (R. p. 56.) Mr. *Baxter* very justly observes—'Why do not philosophers apply their arguments to the common sense of mankind, when the subject itself invites them?' 'Every man is capable of seeing truth, when fairly deduced: and philosophy should be no mystery.' The rustic swain and the refined philosopher have their knowledge of God through the same medium: that is, *analogy*.

As you have mentioned this term, permit me, sir, to make a remark upon it. It is allowed that 'the term *immateriality* never did, or could suggest any idea whatever;' (ib. p. 105.) because ideas arise from the impressions which visible and sensible things make upon us. I use the term idea now in the most simple, and, therefore, the most proper sense. The term immaterial being purely negative, it is used, on this question, to declare the certain existence of a being of whose nature and attributes we can have no knowledge but by *analogy*, or the correspondence of one thing with another; because, not being an object of sense, we can form no idea of him. If we have no souls, we can have no knowledge of him at all, nor it is possible we should; because, in that case, there is nothing existing from which the *analogy* is to be formed: but, upon the supposition that our souls are not material, but conscious intelligent agents, the whole is clear and the argument conclusive. 'For instance, what *wisdom* is in a human creature, that, some similar and *corresponding*, but *incomprehensible* perfection, is in God. We have but *one* conception for both these things, we express them by the same word *wisdom*;
' and

6/ and we analogically transfer both the word and the conception
 from that wisdom and thought we are immediately conscious
 of, to that imperceptible and ineffable perfection in the Divi-
 nity, to the *true* and *real* nature of which we are *intirely*
 blind: which perfection is, in the utmost *propriety* of speech
 we are capable of, called *wisdom*; and not by a mere *figure*
 only, which is purely *voluntary*, and which has no foundation
 in the *nature* of things.' (Brown's Analogy, p. 6.) A book
 which, as far as it respects analogy, no man need be afraid to
 consult or defend. And a subject which, if properly understood
 and pursued, many, if not most, of our conceptions of the Divine
 Being would be more honourable to him, and more useful to
 us. 'The powers and properties of the divine mind,' you say,
 as clearly deduced from the works of God, are not only so
 infinitely superior to those of the human mind, when there is
 some analogy between them, but so essentially different from
 them in other respects, that whatever term we make use of to
 denote the one, it must be *improperly* applied to the other.'
 (ib. p. 105.) I must here be allowed to wish the reader, who
 desires to know 'the powers and properties of the divine mind,'
 to consult the *word* as well as the '*works* of God;' because
 he has more clearly revealed himself in his word of grace
 and righteousness than in the works of nature. I have no
 desire that either should be disesteemed; but, it is only the
 knowledge of God in his revealed word and his beloved
 Son, that is connected with eternal life. Besides, if there
 be *no propriety*, in short, if there be not the *greatest propriety*,
 in the application of analogy in our knowledge of God, I
 despair of ever having any just conception of him. How-
 ever, if I am mistaken, I am open to better instruction.
 Again, if the powers and properties of the divine mind, be
 '*essentially different*' in *some* respect from those of the human
 mind, they must be essentially different in ALL respects;
 or else it will necessarily follow that there are some in which
 they are essentially *alike*. And, wherein they are essentially
 alike, they must be *equal*; because essential likeness admits
 of no degrees of variation. So that the plain inference from
 hence is this—There are *some* respects in which there is NO
natural or *essential* difference or disparity between the creator
 and the created. It cannot therefore be impertinent, sir,
 for me to wish you to draw the line for us, and tell us how
 to reason on this matter; and if you cannot, to recant and
 renounce your assertion. I remember you say somewhere,
 (v. iii.) that *Butler's* analogy does not stand very high in
 your

your esteem—probably you may say the same of *Brown's*—doubtless you have your reasons for it, which I am not at liberty to name—but, I may be pardoned for saying that, if the general design of those books were realized in our minds, the word of God would rise in our esteem as worthy of him, and his nature would never be a subject but of humble and modest contemplation.

‘It is plain,’ you observe, ‘that no proof of the materiality of man can be extended, by any just analogy, to a proof of evidence of a *similar* materiality of the divine nature; for the properties or powers being different, the substance or essence must be different also.’ (v. i. p. 107.) This leaves the question just in the same state: for, according to this language, man is material and God is material, only the materiality of each is not ‘*similar*.’ As the powers and properties of man are but finite, and, as the substance corresponds to the properties it supports, the one is infinite matter and the other but finite. The materiality of man being your grand datum, it will necessarily follow that the divine nature must be material too, if not ‘*similar*,’ as you express it; unless you chuse to allow that the natural and moral image of an immaterial being may be drawn on a material subject; which, if you are disposed to admit, I will thank you for the information. Let ‘the kind of materialism, of which the divine nature consists, be as different from others’ (ib. p. 109.) as you please; whether the grossest or the most refined; still it is matter, and nothing but matter: nor do I find the least hint given that will open a possible alternative. How your treatment of the subject may strike others I am not at liberty to say; but this is my view of it; and, it seems it is that view of it which you apprehended your language would naturally present to your readers.

I do not suppose that any person is so superficial as to charge you with being an *avowed* atheist—but, if I am not greatly mistaken, no other conclusion can possibly be drawn from your premises. Did not you expect this conclusion, sir, when you penned the following sentence? ‘If any man will tax my opinions with *atheism*,’ you say, ‘I shall tax him with great *stupidity* or *malignity*.’ (ib. p. 132.) This must doubtless be an invincible argument!! But, is *this* all you have to alledge against him? If so, whom will it deter from the pursuit of truth? whom will it convince that he is wrong? Were an author disposed to be dogmatical—
L were

were he afraid of trial—how easy to adopt such an assertion! ‘By such *poor* evasions some persons may think to shelter themselves from the force of conviction.’ (v. ii. p. 19.) ‘What!’ said I, on reading these words, ‘can this be the ingenuous, the candid Dr. *Priestley*? Is it possible for that great man to flatter himself that such empty thunder will alarm his opponent, or satisfy his reader! How must he be changed from himself!’ I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

REVEREND SIR,

FROM the divine nature, let us proceed to *common property*. Your opinion of this subject must needs terminate in the same conclusion with the preceding. When we hear an author say that ‘God is, and ever must remain the *incomprehensible*,’ (ib. p. 108.) we cheerfully unite with him from full conviction of the fact. But, when there is an attempt made to confound the Creator with material substance, or what naturally leads to it, by advancing the doctrine of *common property*, we are obliged to dissent for want of evidence. Your following paragraph appears as groundless in point of *argument*, as it is dangerous in point of *morality*.

‘If by the term *immaterial* we simply mean to denote a substance that has properties and powers essentially different from those of *created matter*, it is plain that I have no objection to the term, and in this sense I do believe it is, in fact, used by the generality of mankind. But if, with modern metaphysicians, we intend to denote by it a substance that has *no property whatever in common with matter*, and that even bears no relation to space, I must *deny* that any such substance exists; because, according to such a definition, the Divine Being is necessarily cut off from all communication with, and all action or influence upon, his own ‘creation.’ (v. i. p. 108.) And, you say also, without a common property, ‘the divine mind can neither create matter, nor act upon it.’ (ib. p. 224.)

To ‘*deny*’ a proposition is easy work, and may soon be done; but it is not quite so easy to shew its fallacy. In the first I allow, sir, that you shine; but, I think the present instance

instance will manifest that, in the last, you are weak as other men. When the reader observes the terms '*created matter*' placed as they are here, he is tempted to suspect that the writer has a reference to *matter uncreated*; because, otherwise, he cannot account for the use of such language in such a connection. And, though you speak of a substance whose 'properties and powers are essentially different from 'those of created matter;' yet still the temptation prevails; because, if at last, or in the ultimate sense of things, it must appear that God and matter have some '*common property*,' it will necessarily follow that they have also a *common nature*. And if it be allowed that they have *one* '*common property*,' I apprehend no reason can be given why *every other* property may not be common to them; and, then, we are left without evidence of any *natural* distinction between the eternal God and created matter. By the term immaterial I mean a 'substance that has *no* property whatever in common with 'matter, and that bears no relation to space'—and, though you are pleased to '*deny* the existence of such a substance,' your denial produces no conviction of my mistake; so far from it, that, I had almost said, the *reason* of your denial confirms me in my opinion. The Divine Being must possess some property in common with matter, or, you say, he is 'necessarily cut off from *all* communication with, and *all* 'action or influence upon, his own creation.' Nay, that he 'can neither *create* matter, nor *act* upon it,' without such a property. This, it seems, is the *reason* of your denial; but, if this reasoning proves any thing, it proves too much; and so becomes of no effect. For upon this principle, to say the least, there must be either an eternal property without a subject, or matter must be eternal to support that property. I feel not the least difficulty in saying freely I have no conception at all HOW the Creator *communicated with, or acted upon,* his creation, when he spoke it into existence—but, doubtless, *as* this agency and that communication were then expressed, *in like manner* they will continue to be expressed as long as creation remains. But, were it allowed that this was done *mechanically*, it would follow that he is no more than a material being; which the infinite glory of his nature forbids. That excellency, perfection, or property, which the Divine Being is supposed to hold in common with matter, is eternal and essential to his infinite nature, or it is not. If it is not, I shall leave you to say *how* it was acquired. And, here, sir, I wish you to be very explicit.

But, if the property or perfection be eternal and essential to his nature; then the infinite mind, and created matter, must be naturally and essentially the same, seeing they possess *one common infinite eternal property*. Matter cannot have an eternal property without being eternal itself; and God can have no property but what is eternal.—This being the true plain state of the case; either your arguing on common property must come to nothing, or you must allow the eternity of matter. When you have made up your mind upon it, be so kind as to let us see it. But we will shift our ground and view the subject in your own direction; that you may have a fair hearing. If we examine the properties of matter, according to your own account of them, and shew the reader that neither of them will apply in the present question, justice will be done both to yourself and the subject.

‘Matter,’ you say, ‘is an extended substance, possessed of ‘certain powers of attraction and repulsion.’ (v. i. p. 25. v. iii. p. 16.) ‘Matter must entirely vanish when we ‘take away its property of extension.’ (v. i. p. 123.) I have not introduced your account of matter now to dispute it (that hereafter), but to apply it to the subject in hand. You tell us indeed that ‘Matter has, in fact, *no properties* but those of attraction and repulsion;’ (ib. p. 17.) but I have included that of extension, because, as you observe, it cannot exist without it. Let me ask a question upon this.

Is *extension* then that property which the Divine Being holds in common with matter? and, cannot HE exist without it? ‘Extension,’ you tell us, ‘is that property by means of which matter occupies a *certain portion* of space.’ (ib. p. 25.) It is so—and therefore an extended body, or substance, includes length, breadth, and thickness; and may be divided. ‘The most exalted species of matter possible,’ you observe, (v. ii. p. 177.) admits of this description. All matter, as it is extended, and as it is variously divided, each single part has an assignable place; that place it occupies, and cannot possibly, at the same time, occupy another. Here let me remark, that, what is essential to the *nature* of the whole, is equally so to the several parts; because, dividing the parts, in this case, does not affect the nature of the thing divided. However large, or small, the bulk of the substance extended; whether it occupy a greater, or less, ‘*portion of space*,’ its nature remains the same. If the divine nature therefore be an extended substance, and, as such,
divisible;

divisible ; no reason can be given, I apprehend, why that nature should not be as *really* and *truly* in a dead leaf or a pebble, as in the great eternal GOD. And, as infinite intelligence is essential to his *nature*, with all other divine perfections ; why not essential also to *every part* of creation ? This would be making as many gods as there are particles of matter, I confess ; but, if you allow *extension* to be a property in common with God and with matter, no other termination can be given to your argument. My mind would recoil even at a supposed application of this term to the nature of the Most High, had I not friendship enough for the truth, and for your person, to point out the absurdity of your opinion. I hear, and I would hear with reverence, the following question from the throne of heaven—‘ To whom will ye *liken* me, or shall I be *equal* ? saith the Holy One.’ Isai. xl. 25. Idols are extended material things—occupying certain portions of space ; they are here, but not there. All *equality*, or even *likeness*, between them and the Holy One of Israel you see rejected with disdain and indignation ; which should make us very cautious how we embrace an idea so abhorrent to our Maker. For there is no difference in the *nature* of any material thing ; whether it be used as an idol or burnt in the fire. Isai. xlv. 15. Besides, if *extension* be a property of the divine mind, then, as he is infinite and eternal, there must be *extension* not only beyond, but even prior to, the existence of space, of which it is the measure ; and, without which, space is a mere abstract idea. This seems to me to be repugnant. Space may be considered in two views—the one I call *proper*—the other *improper*. It is used to denote the immensity of God, as duration is to denote his eternity. But eternity is undivided, uninterrupted duration ; for the same reason space is, in this use of it, a boundless indivisible presence, or being : or, if you had rather, ‘ they are only the perfections of a being who is ‘ immense and eternal ; just as unlimited power and unlimited knowledge are the perfections of a being, who is ‘ omnipotent and omniscient.’ This I call an *improper* view of space ; for matter cannot ‘ occupy any portion of it,’ because it is no more capable of being divided than eternity. Were this view of space admitted, there could be no *natural* distinction between the essence of God and the essence of matter ; seeing both would occupy space at the same time and in the same sense. And this would make matter as eternal and immense as the nature and being of God : which

is

is repugnant and absurd. But when the term space is *properly* used, I apprehend it denotes the distance between two or more particles or bodies of material substance. This is the sense in which I use it on the present question.

It is true, there are several wonderful displays of the divine glory under the former dispensation recorded in the old testament—But the Lord discovered himself in one place in distinction from another, not because his nature is measurable by extended space, nor because his nature was, in any sense, confined to the place where his glory appeared; but, simply and only, because the objects of his more immediate regard were in that place, at that time, and not in another. To have revealed his glory promiscuously to the nations at large, or constantly in the same manner to his chosen servants; would not have suited the design of his appearing. When the Lord appeared of old by a ‘*visible symbol*,’ (v. i. p. 113.) it was not designed to teach his creatures that his nature was extended, and therefore might be divided like matter—that *one* part was near to them and *another* farther from them—nor was it meant to ‘*impress their minds with the idea of a real local presence*,’ in any sense to imply a division of his immensity, or partial exclusion of his nature—but to inform them that he was the *only* object of worship, ready to hear their supplications, able to grant their requests, and that he was determined to preserve his glory and support his character, whether in the salvation of his friends or destruction of his foes. Of these solemn facts the visible symbol was always both a token and security. And, it is worth observing that all ‘*visible symbols of the divine familiarity gradually decreased upon the manifestation of Christ*’ in the flesh, of which they were appointed to be types and ‘*figures*.’ So when the Lord is said to ‘*dwell between the cherubim*,’ it is not designed to inform us that his presence was confined to the jewish tabernacle or temple, but chiefly, *yea only*, that he is accessible to his people in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; of which the mercy-seat was a typical representation. When the Divine Being is said to ‘*fill heaven and earth*,’ Jerem. xxiii. 24. we are not to entertain the same idea of it as of water filling the ocean, or of air filling a vessel; because that would be a material extension, and bring us back to the old absurdity; for what is extended *may* be measured and *must* be bounded: but it is designed to teach us an infinite immensity of intellectual presence, without the circumscriptions of space, and without the intervention of darkness. ‘*Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty*

* Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?' Job. xi. 7, 8. 'The eyes of the Lord are in *every place*, be- holding the evil and the good.' Prov. xv. 3. 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' Matt. xviii. 20. This no man can prove to be true of matter, however refined and exalted; and, yet, this is the description which Jehovah gives us of himself. However therefore we may be 'confounded, bewildered, and lost,' in the thought, (ib. p. 111.) yet it is a truth, the *dwelling* of the Lord is, strictly speaking, 'NO WHERE.' (ib. p. 112.) That is, he is not bounded, in any possible sense, by space, nor is his nature susceptible of division; and, consequently, *extension* is not a common property between the blessed God and matter. 'Thus saith the Lord, WHERE is the *place* of my rest?' Isai. lxvi. 1. This query is yet open for an answer; or, rather shews the absurdity of attempting to give one. For aught appears to the contrary, though an immaterial being bears no relation whatever to space, yet such a being exists; who, at first, gave existence to his creation, and continually upholds and governs it.

Your creed, sir, and that of *Socinus* on this article, so nearly correspond, that I shall just present the reader with it and close this letter. 'I believe,' *Socinus* says, 'concerning God, that he is *not a spirit*, properly speaking, i. e. immaterial and incorporeal, but that he is such another sort of body as air or ether is: that he is *not* immense and infinite, and every where present, but is *confined to certain places*: that he has *no* knowledge of such future events as depend on the free will of man, and that it is *impossible* that these things should be foreknown by him: that there is a *succession* in God's eternal duration as well as there is in time, which is the measure of that duration which belongs to finite beings.' (Ryland's Contemplat. Vol. II. p. 139.) Long before now *Socinus* is convinced that this representation of his Maker and his Judge is directly opposite to truth. I am, &c.

L E T T E R X I I .

REVEREND SIR,

COMMON *property* is still our theme. Having found no evidence in favor of your opinion from the property of extension, but the reverse; let us now examine *attraction and repulsion*. On this part of the subject you say, 'Matter having no other properties besides attraction and repulsion, greatly relieves the difficulty which attends the supposition of the creation of it out of nothing, and also the continually moving of it by a being who has hitherto been supposed to have no common property with it. For, according to this hypothesis, both the creating mind, and the created substance, are equally destitute of *solidity* or *impenetrability*; so that there can be no difficulty whatever in supposing that the latter may have been the offspring of the former.' (ib. p. 18.)

This is an insinuation as unworthy a judicious philosopher, as it is incompatible with sound philosophy. For, after all that can be said upon the subject, matter and mind are *precisely* and *universally* the SAME, or they are *essentially* DISTINCT. Either way your thought is a mere play upon words. For, if it be the *latter*, the eternal God and matter cannot possess any common property: and, if it be the *former*, the term matter, or spirit, should be totally disused and expunged; while *one* of them should be uniformly preserved, illustrated, and established. There can be no possible occasion for both; unless it be to perplex, not to say *deceive*, the unwary. Nor does *creation* require any common property; except you allow creation to be as eternal and necessary as the Creator. This is both impossible and absurd. Besides, the property of attraction or repulsion must differ from creating power, or be both the same. If both be the same in nature and agency, *how* will you distinguish the Divine Being from a piece of magnet? *Why* does not the same property still produce the same effects? But this supposition would, by plain and necessary inference, maintain the eternity of matter and annihilate the divine nature. Because, upon that principle, there would be no difference between the motion of attraction or repulsion and the act of creating agency. And also, according to this doctrine, there must be the same

moral

moral excellency in attracting matter as in the great immortal GOD. Were you aware of this gross absurdity, sir? But it necessarily follows the idea of common property. There is, no doubt, a difficulty attending creation; but the difficulty intirely lies, not in the thing itself, but in the shallowness of our capacity for apprehending such an astonishing business. It is arrogance beyond description to suppose our capacity the measure of infinity. If I may so speak, there was a period when creation *was not*—for the sake of argument, let us suppose that period present *now*.—Does matter still exist to support the properties of attraction and repulsion? This would directly lead us to a *material* creator. If God be not matter, what could be the subject of these properties before matter existed? Property cannot exist before its subject.—Though completely absurd and impossible, we will suppose, merely to give you room, that the Deity is a material being possessed of these properties—yet, even then, how could attraction and repulsion give birth to creation? It must be either by acting on the Deity himself, or by giving existence or being to something which before had none.—Each of these two ways, and there is not a third, appears too gross for any sober man to maintain, or even suppose. Consider the subject in what light you please, sir, creation, upon your principle, could never have existed. But, should any one be weak enough to assert, that giving existence to creation and an act of attraction are the *same thing*, that will be the time to enlarge this article. ‘In the mean time,’ to copy Mr. Locke, ‘it is an overvaluing ourselves to reduce *all* to the narrow measure of *our* capacities; and to conclude *all* things impossible to be done, whose manner of doing exceeds our comprehension. This is to make our comprehension infinite, or God finite, when what *he* can do, is limited to what *we* can conceive of it.’ Or, as a great man once said, ‘Must *we* know *all* the art and power of an omnipotent Creator; or allow *no* power and act beyond what *we* know? Let any one answer this at his leisure.’

From creation we proceed to *continual motion*. And here, if we reason properly, the conclusion must be the same as before. Every effect must follow its cause. Motion in matter is an effect of an adequate cause. That cause must be either matter itself, or an intellectual being who is not matter; but you yourself allow that, matter cannot give motion to itself. (ib. p. 355.) Material motion must either be eternal and necessary, or be produced by some being who

M

was

was before, and is more powerful than matter. It is evident that matter cannot begin motion in itself; nor, when begun, can it continue motion. Perpetual motion cannot exist in matter, nor arise from any of its modifications, without a superior external cause. All motion must arise from volition; because it is directed to some end. Matter is not a volitive substance. Electricity and magnetism are not voluntary agents. Attraction and repulsion may be properly called effects of a designing cause; but are not the cause of motion: that is, originally and properly. No cause is equal to continual motion, but the first cause of all motion. Otherwise the effect would be superior to its cause. This, being absurd, cannot be admitted. It is in the nature of matter at rest to resist motion, and therefore cannot cause it. The *primary* cause of material motion, is the *sole* cause of constant motion. There is no adequate cause of this but the eternal GOD. No cause can give what it has not. All second causes, as they are called, are absolutely and for ever at the control of the first; and are, every moment, dependent on his power and pleasure. That which is therefore *inconstant* in itself, cannot be the cause of *constancy* in another. There is a sense in which man is the cause of motion; but he wants both knowledge and power to be the cause of *constant* motion. This defect arises from his being finite and uncertain; for he cannot give what he has not. Not being permanent himself, he cannot be the cause of a permanent effect. And yet man is a voluntary designing agent, which matter is not. Suppose attraction and repulsion therefore to be essential properties of matter, which is merely a supposition, yet still they cannot be the cause of *continual* motion, unless you allow the effect to rise higher than the cause: for nothing can *continue* an effect which is not equal to its *first* production. That continual motion exists we *see* without us and *feel* within us; the sole cause of which is the great Supreme. The revolution of the heavenly bodies, and the circulation of animal juices, proclaim his power and glory. At his will the motions of each began, and their continuance depends on his sovereign pleasure. Attraction and repulsion are not adequate to such phenomena. These properties of matter, as they are called, must be the effects of a material or immaterial cause; unless they are necessary and self-existent. And, be it which it may, they are subject to the government of their cause; as all effects must be. If it be said that, they are the effects of a *material* cause, then it will follow, as before,

before, that matter gives motion to, and acts upon, itself ; which is repugnant and contradictory ; because this would be asserting that it is essential or natural to matter to *effect* a change, while it is allowed to *resist* all change. Which is saying a thing *is*, and *is not*, at the same time, and for the same reason. Which is asserting both sides of a contradiction for truth. And, yet, there is no avoiding this conclusion, but by granting that these properties are the effects of the immediate agency of God ; who is, strictly speaking, an immaterial being, without any property whatever in common with matter. And, as Mr. *Baxter* says, ‘ The *centripetal* force whereby the heavenly bodies gravitate to one another, must be as much impressed upon them every moment, as it was the first moment they began to move. It is only the uninterrupted exertion of the same power. If it were not constant, they would always fly off in straight lines. Bodies resist a change of the *direction* of their motion, as much as a change of their *state* of motion. It is therefore this indefinient impression of the power of the Almighty, that makes them move in *curves* of any kind.’ Clocks and watches are, sometimes, called *automatic*, or *self-moving*, machines—but the inaccuracy of the expression is manifest ; because it is not by any self-inherent exerted power or will that the motion is either begun or continued. This being the fact, it is unphilosophical to compare the motions of infants to such machines ; for though, in their first months and perhaps years of life, they may not be *moral* agents, yet nothing can be plainer than that they are *voluntary* ones ; for which reason they ought not to be compared to clocks and watches, or any mechanical machine.

‘ Of the *beginning* of motion, or action,’ you say, ‘ we must sit down with acknowledging, that we have, in reality, no conception at all.’ (ib. p. 111.) What follows ? Not self-motion in matter—not the materiality of the divine mind—nor that attraction and repulsion are *common properties* of the infinite and everliving God and dead matter—but, we learn much from it of our incompetency to judge of our Creator’s works ; and see hence abundant reason to be humble in his presence, and to decide on his glory and greatness with the greatest diffidence. Rather to be very cautious how we decide at all. In his omnipotent will motion began, though we cannot form a conception of it ; and by the same will it is perpetuated as long as he pleases. Nor can there be any departure from this sentiment, even in theory, without supposing him to be dependent on the will, and subject to the control, of some superior.

Though common property does not make the blessed God *subject* to matter, yet it so *confounds* the creator and the created, that you cannot distinguish the one from the other. Though 'we have no conception at all' *how* motion commenced at first by the will of God, nor *how* it is continued; yet we have a more rational knowledge of the *fact* without common property than we could have with it; because, that would ultimately lead us, as we have seen already, either to conclude that the divine nature is material—or that matter is eternal—or that material motion must be necessary or self-caused: each of which you can prove to be contradictory and absurd. 'Wherever there is motion, where 'before there was none, there must be a *principle of beginning the motion*, different from matter, which we are demonstratively certain has no self-motive power. If this plain truth 'had been attended to, it would have saved philosophers a 'world of disputing;' and, I may add, their readers a world of precious time. But now I proceed to another thought in the last paragraph I quoted.

'The creating mind and the created substance,' you say, 'are equally destitute of *solidity* and *impenetrability*.' This does not, in the least, change the argument; for, if so, there can be no natural or essential difference between the creating mind and the created substance: that is, both are material, only destitute of solidity and impenetrability: that is, both are unsolid and penetrable matter. While your doctrine leads to a total material universe, in words, God and matter *one nature*; you have, I think, though perhaps undesignedly, laid a foundation for an introduction of Dean Berkley's notion; *that there is no matter at all*. For, if matter be a penetrable unresisting body, in its very nature, like the divine mind, I confess I have not penetration enough to distinguish the one from the other; there being no criterion by which to form a judgment of the difference, if any difference should be supposed. You very justly observe that 'every thing we 'call matter is an *object of sense*;' (ib. p. 107.) but, you know the divine mind is not such an object.—Either, therefore, our senses are not judges of matter; or, there can be no matter of which they are called to judge. *I see, I feel*, the pen in my hand—but, being 'equally destitute of solidity' with the mind that made it, how can I be sure that it is a material body, and not *part* of the creating mind? And, yet, it must be a material substance, because it is an object of my senses. Apart from sense we have no evidence of the
existence

existence of matter—unsolid and penetrable matter, equal to the divine mind, cannot be an object of sense.—We are obliged therefore, even on your own words, sir, to conclude, either—1. That we have no senses—or, 2. That there is no matter in the universe—or, 3. That matter, and the divine mind, are *not* equally unsolid and penetrable. That which is *equal* in its internal nature and external qualities, must be universally alike; and, if its existence be known at all, must be known by the *same kind* of evidence: either, therefore, we have no creating mind, or no created substance. The latter is known to exist by *sense*, if at all; the former by *reason* or inference: but unsolid matter can no more *create* than that which is solid. I know you tell us, ‘The divine nature has properties incompatible with all created and finite natures;’ (idem.) but, if his nature, and ‘all beings that have any action or influence upon one another, must have some *common* property’—if the ‘possession’ of this property differs only in the *manner* in which it is possessed—and, if penetrability belongs *equally* to the ‘divine and created nature’—why, then, we are still without evidence of any *natural* difference, and the inference is the same as before. For this reason there can be no danger of ‘deceiving ourselves’ in giving a *common name* to things united by a *common property*. A mere *modal* possession of properties has nothing to do with the *nature* of the subject. If penetrability be this common property, be so obliging, sir, as to shew us, *how* the creating mind can possess superior properties to created substance; and, *how* we are to know the one from the other. If two distinct substances, *equally unsolid*, may not only exist, but exist near each other, yea *as* upon one another (you will pardon this inaccurate language); where dwells the man who can prove that I contemplate the one and not the other? Both being *equally penetrable*, one may occupy the other’s place, so to speak, or both be in one place together and at once, for ought I know, at any given period. The creating mind and created substance being thus confounded, there is no discerning the one from the other. But, on the supposition of equal unsolidity in the creating mind and created substance, you think there can be ‘no difficulty in allowing the *latter* to be the offspring of ‘the *former*.’ With submission, sir, I think the ‘difficulty’ remains in full force; for you only shift your ground without changing the nature of the argument. Take away the terms *solid* and *unsolid*, and your doctrine still is this—Matter may
create

create matter ; and so on as before. Apply the terms, it is nevertheless the same. Matter, whether solid or unsolid, is a wise and designing cause and agent, or it is not. If it *is*, there must be constant, universal, and necessary evidence of it ; which, all the world knows, is contrary to fact. If it is *not*, it must be the product of a being who is so ; and who, for that reason, ought never to be blended with it in any possible sense : but, to be constantly defined as a being truly and properly *immaterial*. When philosophers speak thus promiscuously of things which are naturally and necessarily distinct, whatever may be intended, it is manifest their language discovers but little reverence of God, and conveys no instruction to the reader. To create, is to give existence and being to something which before had none : and you seem desirous of relieving the difficulty of this business, by making the nature of the creator and the created alike.—But, what an expedient ! If this be relieving the difficulty in *theory*, it is by virtually denying the *fact* ; for, call matter what you please, it must either have been eternal and necessary, or created itself, or be created ‘*out of nothing*,’ by a being essentially distinct from, and infinitely superior to it. Besides, creation must either be necessary or voluntary. If it be the *first* ; it must have been eternal, and without cause or design. This excludes *all* intelligence from the universe. If it be the *second*, it necessarily excludes matter from the nature of the Creator ; because matter is neither a volitive nor active substance ; and, because creation necessarily includes both. Every thing that is *not* eternal and necessary must have a *beginning* ; and that beginning must arise from an active, intelligent, designing cause ; and every one knows that matter is not such a cause, whether solid or unsolid. That which *cannot* modify or change its *manner* of being, *could not*, at first, begin its own *existence*. You yourself allow that matter is passive in the changes it endures.—That therefore which gave *existence* to matter and orders all its *changes* or modifications, that cause must be strictly and properly an *immaterial* being—whom we call GOD.

I am content to sit down as ignorant of the *manner* of the divine agency when he spoke creation into being, as you are of the beginning of motion ; for, neither the one nor the other is addressed to our enquiry. We have only to do with the *facts*. I dare not indulge my itch of knowing so far as you seem to do—and, I have my reason for it. ‘The system of materialism,’ you say, ‘has unquestionably this advantage, that it is entirely free from another difficulty, viz. how an immaterial substance

can

‘ can act upon matter ; a difficulty which, in my idea, amounts to an absolute impossibility, as those substances have hitherto ‘ been defined.’ (ib. p. 111, 112.) These two strong terms, *unquestionably* and *impossibility*, stand for nothing—they are merely two expletives ; till you produce solid proof to support them. In this sentence, I suppose, you carry common property to its ultimum—though I confess, on your hypothesis, there is a very easy and natural transition from step to step till we come to this conclusion. If it be ‘ *absolutely impossible*’ for a being who is, properly speaking, immaterial, to ‘ *act upon matter*’ NOW, it must be equally impossible for such a being to give existence to it at FIRST ; and, consequently, if your doctrine be admitted and pursued, we can have no evidence that such a being exists.—The conclusion is—either there is no such substance as matter in the universe, or, it must be eternal, and gave being, modification, and motion, to itself—all which is repugnant and absurd. If I understand your meaning, you seem to consider the whole universe as one great mechanical machine, and the various movements of the several parts to arise from mechanical momentum or force impressed by the original first cause ; himself a material being. If this be not your idea, I have misunderstood it ; and would wish to be set right. But, if this should be your meaning, it must necessarily lead you to the conclusion before mentioned ; for, as an intelligent immaterial being *only* can be the cause of motion, so, such a being does not act on matter in a mechanical way. By mechanical momentum or force, I mean the pressure of one part of matter on another, in a due configuration, to produce motion in the next, and so on. But the first cause of motion cannot be in matter, any more than a proper arrangement of parts to receive motion ; but both suppose an active, designing, and therefore immaterial agent. Matter being an extended, divisible, and passive substance, suppose penetrability were true, has no property whatever in common with deity. Without common property, you say, there are ‘ *difficulties*’ before us ; and with it, I may say, from the preceding argumentation, there are glaring and gross *absurdities* ; and, as this appears to be the true state of the case, I shall leave the reader to judge for himself. Indeed the scripture says that ‘ *God is a spirit*,’ John, iv. 24. But, ‘ *all that is there meant by spirit*,’ you tell us, ‘ *is an invisible power*.’ (ib. p. 112.) If ‘ *invisible power*’ be *all* the meaning of the sacred volume, and, if your doctrine be true, we are still in the same place ; because, according to your reasoning, this invisible power possibly *may be*, and probably

probably *is*, a material being—somewhat comparable, let us suppose, to the main spring of a watch, which, though it lies concealed, occasions the motions of the whole machine. But, in that case, the effect would be superior to the cause, and consequently the whole absurd. ‘Invisible power’ means the true and eternal God, who created all things out of nothing for his own pleasure, and governs all things for his own glory; between whom and his creation there can be no common property whatever; and, who is, in a true and proper sense, an *immaterial being*. When the bible and philosophy are set at variance, no dispassionate man can hesitate a moment which side to chuse. I esteem philosophers, and I love philosophy; but I give them both away for the word of God, when they are set against it. There, and *only* there, those principles are learnt, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which are ‘*worth contending for*’; because the *real* christian thus taught, and *only* thus, has ‘his fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.’ Rom. vi. 22.

Having seen that the Divine Being is truly a spirit, or strictly and properly immaterial, it might now be expected that we shew the soul of man to be so too.—But, if the reader will excuse it, the two next letters will be employed in examining another branch of the subject; and then the doctrine of the soul will be brought forward of course. I could be glad to join in sentiment with all wise and learned men, and surely with Dr. *Priestley*; but I cannot embrace unproved assertions! I am, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

REVEREND SIR,

HERE I begin to consider, more immediately, your account of *matter*. Though I can by no means acquiesce in your opinion of this subject; yet I have not vanity enough to suppose I can make an addition to what others have said upon it before me. However it is right I should say what I think; and you will permit me to do it in my own way. You very justly observe,

‘We know very little of the internal structure of matter, having but few data to argue from.’ (v. iii. p. 243, 246, 247.)

This

This being the case, the greater caution becomes us in deciding on a subject we so '*very little*' understand. It has been a prevailing opinion that matter is a solid impenetrable body ; but you scruple not positively to assert that 'Matter has *not* impenetrability or solidity.' (ib. p. 234.) That there are *degrees* of consistence, or firmness of texture, in matter, will be readily allowed ; but, will it thence follow that matter *has no solidity* at all ? This appears so much like Spinoza's *plenum*, that, perhaps, some people may think they are both the same. How is it that A does not occupy the place of B, while B continues to occupy its own place ? Matter, as an extended body, 'occupies a certain portion of space'—but, if it be unsoft and unresisting, how can its bulk or dimensions be ascertained ? No more than the great and blessed God. It has been said, 'that two bodies *cannot* be in the same place at the same time'—and daily experiment seems to confirm the assertion ; but, if matter be destitute of solidity, either there can be no place, or ten thousand bodies may be in the same place at once : for, what is penetrable, can have no bounds or dimensions. Is it not a glaring proof of the solidity of matter that I can walk on the ground without being swallowed up ? Is not the same fact attested and established by all the labors of the mechanic ? If one part of matter might fill another's place, all these facts would be mere creatures of our fancy, if we ourselves had any being. It is also granted that the parts of the most solid body may be separated by a sufficient force ; but, let the parts be divided to infinity, if possible, still every particle must have its given portion of space, its form and size ; and cannot be absorbed in another. Besides, who will prove to me that unsoft matter exists ? It cannot be an 'object of *sense*.' Were matter destitute of solidity, the whole globe must be mere empty space or pore, there would not be solid matter enough to fill a 'nut-shell,' as you say ; (v. i. p. 17.) for the shell itself would not exist. Common experience confronts the penetrability of matter. You can fill a pint with water, and you can prevent the escapement of effluvia by the intervention of various bodies ; such as water, earth, stone, and glass. To say matter is a divisible and yet unsoft body, conveys no idea. Every particle of dust, and odoriferous effluvia, proves its divisibility ; and, being divided, each particle must 'occupy a certain portion of 'space,' because matter is not immense : which, however, it could not do, without being hard and solid. Nor can you account for material motion on the principles of unsoft body ; for motion supposes impulse. But unsoft, unresisting matter

can neither impel nor be impelled. And motion also implies change of place, or, rather is change of place; but, what is unsolid cannot be divided, and not being divisible, it cannot be said to occupy one place more than another; and consequently cannot be said to change its place. This is so clear that no philosophical experiments can overturn it. Nay, they all suppose and confirm it. And, even you yourself, sir, seem freely to allow this, when you say, that an 'atom, an ultimate component part of any gross body, is necessarily supposed to be *'perfectly solid, wholly impervious to any other atom.'*' (ib. p. 5, 6.) This is all I mean by the solidity of matter. For no one will say, surely, that the component parts change their nature by being united to each other! If the atoms are *'perfectly solid'* in a state of detachment, they must be the same in a state of composition. And, would a 'nut-shell' contain all the *'perfectly solid'* atoms in the solar system? If this simple question be not important enough to demand your serious regard, it is, at least, deserving *one* of your thoughts. The power by which the *'infinite hardness'* of these atoms was at first formed and is still continued—the power that gives solidity to an invisible impalpable atom, can, for that reason, constitute a corresponding solidity to any body composed of these atoms, of any possible magnitude. But, so little seems your attachment to the term *matter*, that you have 'no objection to its being called *spirit*, provided the same difference be made in spirits as hitherto has been made in substances.' (v. i. p. 353. v. iii. p. 23, 235.) But how is it, sir, that you are so vague and unsettled? Can the terms be converted and neither religion nor philosophy suffer? If so, let us give them up at once—for, if it be no difference which is retained, no great harm can arise from the exclusion of both. I recollect to have been riding, in the whitsun-week of 1775, with some friends whom I esteem both for their piety and their parts.—Among other topics of conversation, I said to one of them, 'Pray, Mr. C——, *what is spirit?*' He hastily replied, 'Why, *immaterial matter.*' The inadvertence of the language produced a smile, was readily recalled, and all was settled. I called my friend's language *inadvertent*—but, really, sir, if your doctrine be true, I said too much; for then immaterial matter, and material spirit, would both mean the same thing; that is, in my idea, both would be destitute of meaning. When terms become thus doubtful in their meaning, and equivocal in their application, it is not of much consequence who is the man of learning, or who is
the

the reverse. If 'the cause of *truth* be best supported by 'calling every thing by its *usual* name;' (ib. p. 190.) how can it be supported at all by virtually telling us that *names* may either be converted or disused?

'If we adhere to the rules of philosophy,' you say, 'they will oblige us to conclude that *resistance*, on which alone our opinion concerning the solidity or impenetrability of matter is founded, is *never* caused by solid matter, but by something of a very different nature, viz. a power of repulsion always acting at a real, and in general an assignable distance from what we call the body itself.' (v. i. p. 4.) The cause of resistance, or re-action, you know, sir, must be an active or passive substance. If the *former*, resistance must be the effect of the divine agency. If the *latter*, then it must arise from the solidity or the cohesion of the parts of the body resisting; for if the component parts did not cohere, there could be no resistance. Cohesion must be natural and necessary to matter; or the effect of an active, designing cause, who is not matter. Were it necessary and natural to matter, it would be the same, in every sense, in all bodies; which we know now it is not. So that cohesion also leads us up to the same cause as before. All our experiments suppose the passive nature of matter; no *new* laws can be added to it. Consonant with which remark you say, 'resistance is caused by something of a very different nature' from solid passive matter, viz. 'an *active* power of repulsion.' An active power, or power of action, whether attraction or repulsion, is language incongruous to matter, and belongs, as you say, to 'something of a very different nature' from it. This power of repulsion, therefore, must be the power of the first cause, the eternal God; constantly exerted, or the power of nothing. To speak of the power of nothing is repugnant. Let us therefore disabuse ourselves. Of unsolid, unresisting matter we have no evidence; and the thing itself must be proved to exist before we speak of its power. All power must be exerted on something; or the power of which we speak must be discovered; or we have no reason to speak of it. For it means nothing to speak of that of which we have no evidence. The patient, or thing on which power is exerted, must be matter or spirit. Spirit, or an immaterial being, as it is not susceptible of material impulse, cannot be the subject of re-action or resistance. All impulse, momentum, or force, and resistance made to that force, suppose and prove the existence of matter. And this re-action of

matter against material impulse, or force, must arise from the solidity or cohesion of its parts. Cohesion, therefore; which in this case is only another word for solidity, must arise from the immediately and constantly exerted power, and be regulated by the wisdom, of an immaterial and designing agent: viz. the eternal God. Without cohesion there could be no motion, or change of place, because there could be no resistance. Cohesion and resistance therefore we ought to call the effect of divine agency continually present.

I know you tell us that if the '*powers of resistance and cohesion*' be the immediate agency of the Deity himself, it 'necessarily follows that there is not in nature any such thing as matter, distinct from the Deity and his operations.' (ib. p. 8.) So that, according to your reasoning, matter must naturally possess a *power of action*, that is, be naturally active, or it cannot be distinguished from the Creator. But, would this distinguish matter from deity? By no means. If matter be allowed to be naturally active in one instance; no reason can be given why it should not be so universally; and, if so, there can be no evidence of the interposition of deity in any phenomena whatever; and, if so, we have no proof of the existence of miracles, nor, in short, of the existence of God himself. Here permit me to observe, sir, that all bodies have parts, and those parts have others (I mean now component parts); and so on; till we arrive at what you call '*atoms*.' Let us suppose these atoms to be invisible and impalpable—would it thence follow that they did not exist? By no means. It requires the same power to keep in being and hold together the parts of a small pebble on the sea shore as the largest mountain or the solar system; and neither more nor less. When the Almighty holds together, or causes to cohere, any number of parts in a solid body, is the power exerted on *himself*? Or, is the resistance that ensues on such exertion, *himself*? Both are the result of his '*operation*' we grant; but is there no distinction between the worker and the work? between the cause and the effect? Have you considered this, sir? You might as well think of annihilating matter altogether as changing its place, form, or size, without the immediate will of God. But, I think you entirely give up the argument when you allow that '*these powers are not self-existent in matter*;' (ib. p. 7.) for, if they be not self-existent in it, they are not natural to it, but must be *imparted*; and may be imparted to what degree the giver pleases. Imparted; by whom? to what purpose?

purpose? Let these things be ascertained. Yes, sir, when we see '*constant effects*' produced by any substance,' we are willing to allow, in a proper sense, that they are produced 'by powers properly *belonging to* that substance;' (ib. p. 9.) as the instance of burning to fire.—But still we are obliged to bear in mind that even these powers, as they are called, are under the immediate and constant control of a foreign agent. They can do nothing *of themselves*. We have a proof of this in the three jewith young men who were cast into the fiery furnace, for refusing to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image. It is as much a law of nature for fire to separate the parts of bodies thrown into it, as it is for a magnet to attract iron; but all these laws receive their being and efficacy from the *giver*, and not the *subjects*, of them.

'A power of repulsion always acts at a *real distance* from the body itself,' you say.—As to a power of action in matter there is none—and, to talk of an agent acting where he is not, is absurd and contradictory. It is equal to saying, a person acts without proof of his acting. An effect must be called, I think, in the highest sense, contingent, when it has no connection with its cause. Even the Deity himself cannot act where he is not. An effect cannot be produced without union with its cause. My hand has a relation to my pen while the latter is in my ink-stand; but all the attraction or repulsion in the universe would not make it write without contact or union with my hand; that is, the effect would not follow if at a '*real distance*' from the cause. Every particle of matter, and also every large body, 'occupies a certain portion of space,' and, for that reason, is bounded; while therefore it remains in that given place it cannot act beyond it, even supposing it could act at all; to say that matter acts therefore where it is not, is equal to saying, nothing acts there, because it is not there to act. If an effect be produced, it must be by a present and not absent cause. While it is evident that matter has no active force—and while it is not possible for any thing to act where it is not—this power of repulsion must belong, as you justly observe, to '*something of a very different nature*' from matter—namely, the great first cause of all things. You seem aware of some difficulty in supposing matter to act where it is not; (ib. p. 351.) and, with me, it is a difficulty totally insuperable; if not a gross contradiction. For, in my idea, it is the same as to say, a thing *is*, and *is not*, at the same time and for the same reason. I suppose the thought of active matter was first suggested
by

by a mistaken jealousy for the honor of God ; lest his never-ceasing agency on his creation should appear, in some cases at least, to derogate from his infinite majesty and excellency. But, on the other hand, it is easy to prove, I should apprehend, that it is totally incompatible with his divine perfections, and his government of the universe, to suppose that such actions, or events, which have the most seeming insignificance to us, can occur without his immediate agency ; because, how diminutive and unconnected, soever we may esteem them, they make an essential and necessary part of one grand whole ; every branch of which, when united, concurs to display his supreme design and infinite wisdom. A difficulty may attend the reflection of the rays of light, and other phenomena in the natural world. In the moral world also there are difficulties not more easily solved than these. And, in my poor opinion, it is far more eligible to let them all remain just as they are, and ingenuously own our ignorance, than attempt a solution by any thing absurd in itself, and dishonorable to him, ' whose understanding is ' infinite, and who will do all his pleasure.' Ps. cxlvii. 5. Isai. xlv. 10. Not that I have any objection to the nicest enquiry into any subject that properly comes before us, nor do I think time lost that is thus employed ; except when vanity is our guide and self-applause our object : then, indeed, every step may be attended with danger, and, the sooner we stop the better. When I contemplate ' a piece ' of glass, of crystal, or a diamond ;' (ib. p. 14.) I see the condescension of the great God in rendering some certain parcels of matter, through a particular modification, both ornamental and useful to his creature man.—But, I see nothing that proves matter to be destitute of solidity, or that any thing can act where it is not. Detach the component parts of these dense transparent bodies, and reduce them to their primary state, and the sun may send his rays upon them till he drops from his orb without producing the present appearances. So that their transparency, and the effects of it, cannot arise from their *nature*, but simply and only from their state of *modification*, or manner of being.

Some philosophers seem to suppose there are *powers* in matter, by which it can act without the Creator's constantly exerted and immediate agency. This is your opinion I apprehend ; for you say it is ' possible for God to endure ' substances (though you cannot answer every objection to it) ' with *powers* which when communicated produce effects ' in

‘in a manner different from his own immediate agency.’ (v. iii. p. 233.) With those who believe in the doctrine of a soul this assertion has no difficulty at all; but, on the scheme of a materialist, it is so full of objections, that it is nothing else. Few words are used by some philosophers perhaps with less accuracy than this of power, or powers. Every one knows that when it is used properly it signifies a capacity for *action*, or *doing* somewhat.—This sense, however, is often forgotten. It is sometimes said, the *power* of numbers, that is figures—the *powers* of mechanism—the *powers* of music—but very improperly; for this language will never lead us to a just idea of what we hear and see; and so on. *Powers* in matter is so obscure a term that it should never be used on such a subject without a free and open explanation; for, if matter could act at all, and, if it could act, in any given instance, independent of Jehovah’s ‘*immediate agency*,’ it would be impossible to shew a reason why it might not repeat and multiply its actions without him; and this would, at once, as you say elsewhere, ‘necessarily cut him off from all communication with, and all ‘action or influence upon, his own creation.’ So that your reasoning overthrows the doctrine you wish to establish. Matter must be totally, universally, and constantly subject to the control of the great first cause; or be independent of him: there is no possible alternative. Matter cannot possess any *powers* of motion, or active force, either inherently or by communication; nor does it change place, or even resist a change of place, but as it is *acted upon* by a foreign agent. You quite confirm this assertion by your own suffrage. ‘*It is an undoubted fact*,’ you say, ‘*that every body perseveres in a state of rest or motion, till it be compelled to change that state by some external force.*’ (v. i. p. 353. v. iii. p. 236.) This being the case, you know there can be no powers in matter, nor any effects be produced by it, unless there be a soul, ‘*different from the divine agency.*’ For, by your concession, a body at rest would have for ever remained in that state, had it not been put into motion by ‘*some external force.*’ And, as matter does not *begin*, so, neither does it *stop* its own motion; for, being once in motion, you justly observe, it ‘*perseveres in that state, till compelled to change it by some external force.*’ If matter could stop its motion, for the same reason it could begin it; but the *power* that causes both, on your own evidence, is extraneous from it, and not natural or necessary to it.

Yes,

Yes, sir; I know how you try to account for resistance. You say that 'unsolid matter is a substance which is possessed of a power of repulsion, and if an approaching body can not effectually overcome that power, it prevents it from coming in its place.' (v. iii. p. 5.) But, I would observe that 'unsolid matter' occupies no place; and therefore cannot change it. Matter possesses no active power; and therefore one part cannot actively 'approach' another.—Resistance made by one body to another, in order to avoid a change of place, cannot belong to an unsolid substance, nor ought it to be called repulsion, of which in the next letter; because repulsion is not a power or property of matter. You should not have forgotten, sir, that what stops motion in matter, or prevents a change of place, is an 'external force'; and therefore cannot be natural to it, or a power or property of it. As no one part of matter, whether at rest or in motion, possesses an active power to resist the impulse of another, for that reason resistance cannot arise from any natural inherent exerted influence; and, therefore, upon the whole, I conclude that *resistance in matter arises from the solidity of it*, and that the solidity of it is the result of divine agency upon it. This power of resistance is impressed in different degrees on different bodies, as they were originally designed by the first cause for different purposes.—This we see in water, earth, stones, and so on. Besides, this idea is confirmed by the various degrees of force required to separate the parts of various bodies—which, on the idea of unsolid matter and repulsion, would not admit of such experiments and evidence. To talk of separating the parts of what is unsolid, is not talking philosophically—and to say the power of repulsion opposes or resists the power of repulsion, is using words without ideas. But, hearing you say, 'I lay no great stress on the penetrability of matter,' (ib. p. 379.) I feel an inclination to pay the less attention to it, and therefore dismiss it. I am, &c.

LETTER XIV.

L E T T E R X I V .

REVEREND SIR,

WHEN you assert that 'Matter entirely vanishes on taking away the property of extension,' (v. i. p. 123.) I readily accede to it; because it is manifest that every body occupies a certain portion of space. But, when you say that 'the powers of attraction or repulsion are necessary, and, in reality, absolutely essential to its very nature and being;' (ib. introd. p. 38. work, p. 5.) I am obliged to demurr for want of evidence. Many things are said not quite so easily proved. It is already clear that active powers are so far from being 'absolutely essential to the nature and being of matter,' that they do not at all belong to it—and, if I should be justified by and by in denying your assertion, upon your own authority, it will be your work to reconcile such contradictory assertions from the same pen. Attraction and repulsion may be laws impressed on certain portions of matter, peculiarly placed, by the great author of the universe; but, were they '*essential properties*' of it, they must universally obtain: that is, they would appear under every possible modification, and in every possible situation of being; that is, every parcel and particle of matter would necessarily and constantly repel and attract each other at the same time; for what is essential to it cannot be separated from it. Of this, however, there is no proof. Every one knows that the objects of electric or magnetic attraction are not universal. The particles of flour, sand, or dust, for instance, will not attract each other to form a mass of dough, and so on, without some other body to unite them. Take the filings of iron, silver, or gold, and turn them as often as you please, change their position ten thousand times, they will not form a similar body to that of which they are filings, till you melt them in a crucible or furnace. Nay, separate the parts even of a piece of magnet itself, and they possess no power to unite again; let them be placed in what position you will.

You chuse to tell us that 'attraction and repulsion comprise *all the possible* affections of matter;' (v. iii. p. 125.) but is not this asserting much more than can be proved? Is all material

O

motion

motion then the result of attraction and repulsion? Observe the motion of the eye, the hand, the tongue, the feet—the various modulations of the voice arising from the different inflections of the larynx.—The author who will prove all these to be the effects of attraction and repulsion shall be my Apollo! ‘The circulation of the blood, lymph, and chyle, through their various meanders, can never be proved to originate in, and be promoted by, any powers of attraction and repulsion. It must be an infinite power to urge on the fluids of an animal body ten thousand different ways at once. Why have not philosophers yet found a term of art by which to describe this astonishing process? It acts upwards contrary to gravity, and where repulsion fails us. The motion is constantly consumed, and new force is constantly impressed.’ All motion must arise from, and be continued by, volition, or a voluntary agent; because it is directed to some end. But, would any person undertake to prove that attraction or repulsion is a voluntary agent? And, yet, without this proof, what you say of them, sir, cannot stand a moment’s examination. Indeed, you seem aware of this, and say that ‘actual motion necessarily leads us to a self-moving being.’ (ib. p. 147.) Now a ‘*self-moving being*’ must either be material or immaterial, that is, matter or mind. If the *first*, then matter must possess a self-motive power; which is not true. If the *second*, then ‘actual motion’ must arise from an immaterial being; and, consequently, attraction and repulsion cannot be the power or property of matter, but a proof of deity present. We readily give you credit and applause, sir, for the advances you have made in experimental philosophy; but, you will excuse it, if we cannot allow you to *institute*, and if we believe you have not *found*, any new laws of matter and motion. The laws of nature are not in our power. They were *before* us; they are *above* us; and, if at any time we thwart them, we fail in our experiments. They must be *consulted*; they will be *obeyed*. Whatever ‘new and just lights,’ therefore, those may be, ‘which late observations may have thrown on this part of philosophy;’ (v. i. p. 4.) the result of their ‘observations’ must agree to the above conclusion, or their being ‘*new*’ will not supply their want of truth: and, of course, their being ‘*just*’ will remain a query. The laws of the material system may more fully appear yet, on further investigation and experiment; but we cannot change or supersede them. These laws have no influence, or existence, apart from, or independent of, the presence and pleasure of GOD. If
 God

God appointed the *uses* of matter, and keeps it in *being*, of which there can be no doubt, it is absolutely necessary that he should have the exclusive right of disposing of it as he chuses. We cannot build houses of water any more than a ship could swim in an ocean of marble. Here, sir, I would beg leave to remind you of the language of Dr. Price; which, by the way, I should not have done, had you properly considered it when writing to him. Speaking of attraction the doctor justly observes, 'All power is the power of something. Of what, in the present case? Attraction and repulsion in matter cannot be its own actions—must be the effect of some actions upon it. But of what action are they the effects? Let this be explained.' (v. iii. p. 15.) Could I have found your explanation of this business, I had not said any thing about it; but it still lies open and waits for your reply. 'Could matter move without being *acted upon* by a foreign cause,' as the doctor says, 'it must move itself;' and, to this declaration you must accede, or allow that matter is *entirely* 'a torpid passive thing.' But, I turn from the doctor to you; supposing I am furnished, even from your own pen, with sufficient authority for *denying* that attraction and repulsion are essential properties or powers of matter.

You say that 'attraction or repulsion is a power of moving matter in a certain direction;' (ib. p. 105.) every word of which is against your general scheme. The design of language is to impart knowledge; but we can learn nothing from this language of yours without an explanation. And yet, it may be, an explanation would prove unfriendly to your hypothesis.—However, let the truth come out; that the reader may judge for himself. 'A *power* of moving matter,' does not exist in matter; for you say a change of state must arise from '*some external force*;' consequently that power cannot be an essential property of matter. Nor is the power of '*moving*' matter inherent in it or essential to it, because, in that case, matter in motion is passive and not active. Can a substance be active and passive too, in the same instance? Besides, what has a power to move matter in '*a certain direction*,' must also have a will and capacity to order that direction; unless we admit a blind undefining agent; which is the first-born of absurdities. Again,

You assert that 'attraction and repulsion is the *same power*.' (ib. p. 37.) If we refer to the original of all motion, under certain considerations, this is true; but applying it to matter, I suppose no assertion can be less supported by evidence.

Matter, in itself, you say, resists *all* change of state—attraction and repulsion are directly opposite in their tendency and operation.—Now, according to your doctrine, that which would never move till moved, and only as it is moved, must, nevertheless, have a power and tendency to move in opposite and contrary directions at the same time. That is, it must have a power to act and not to act, at once; for attraction and repulsion, if equal, must destroy each other; and then no motion follows. ‘Two such contrary and inconsistent tendencies, planted at once in one and the same subject, is a notion destructive of itself; and therefore not to be effected by infinite power: for to effect impossibilities is not the object of any power.’ Let us look at the particulars of this notion.

In one place you say, it is an undoubted fact that matter resists all change of state—in another, that attraction is essential to the very nature and being of matter—that this attraction is a power of moving matter in a certain direction—in short, that repulsion, though directly opposite to attraction, is one and the same power with it. These things cannot stand together. Some part must give way. The truth is, all motion must be begun, continued, changed, or stopped, from design.—No power can move in any direction, much less in different, least of all in opposite, directions; without design, if at all.—Attraction and repulsion therefore may be safely concluded to be the effects of divine agency, the sole original of motion; but not essential properties or powers of that substance which naturally resists all change. I took the liberty to ask, (R. p. 53.) if you could fully explain the doctrines of adhesion, attraction, and gravitation? and here I have my answer; for, it is evident that by saying they are the powers or properties of matter, that you either do not properly understand the subject, or have written what you did not intend. ‘Matter,’ says a great man, ‘in the philosophy of many, has usurped the power of the living God, the power of the human soul, and the power of all other living and intelligent causes.’—But, such philosophy is vain; being absurd in idea and destitute of evidence in fact. Suffer me to mention one word, sir, on cause and effect. I mean now God and matter.—Intelligent created agents are out of the question. It should be remembered that all second causes are effects of the first; and operate only to the accomplishment of his will.—If you say that attraction and repulsion are effects of the first

first cause, you agree with us and give up your point.—If you say they are the agency of a second cause, then, as all agency supposes volition and design, still, you must either resign the argument, or prove that matter is a designing voluntary agent. There is no alternative. The choice is left to your option.

True, sir; it is manifest you feel a sort of jealousy for the reputation of matter.—I wish you discovered an equal concern for the glory of Christ.—This passing—you seem very desirous of wiping off an *odium* from matter which is supposed long to have lain upon it. I said, *supposed*; forgive the term, for, really I cannot understand it as any dishonor to matter to consider it in that point of light in which the great Creator has placed it; nor a disgrace to deny that of it which was never proved to be true. You say, ‘Since matter has, in fact, no properties but those of attraction and repulsion, it ought to *rise in our esteem*, as making a nearer approach to the nature of spiritual and immaterial beings, as we have been taught to call those which are opposed to gross matter.’ (v. i. p. 17.) By this time it is clear to the reader that attraction and repulsion are NOT properties of matter; and therefore the grand recommendation to ‘our esteem’ is *not* to be found. According to your own words elsewhere the *grossest* and the *most refined* parts of matter are not naturally different, they only differ in size. This, therefore, is another reason why ‘our esteem’ of matter must remain just as it was. And further, if by ‘spiritual and immaterial beings,’ you only mean some beings who are more refined and exalted than others, but still material; it is a mere play upon sounds, because you yourself assert they are not essentially different. (ib. p. 71.) And, if you design by these terms beings whose nature is truly and properly immaterial, even then also you speak to no purpose in this respect; because, the nearest possible ‘approach’ of matter to such beings admits of a natural, nay demands an essential difference; and consequently between them there can be no comparison whatever. Every one knows that matter has *no degrees* of perfection; all parts of it being *equally* unactive, and *equally* disposed to resist all change of state. Your thought therefore offers no reason why matter ‘ought to *rise in our esteem*’; but leaves it just where it has been from the foundation of the world. If it be a mark of baseness and imperfection in matter to be accounted a ‘*solid, inert, and sluggish substance*,’ that mark must still remain upon
it

it till you, or some other person, may have proved that it is *naturally active*. If this herculean task can be performed, permit me, sir, to invite you to undertake it; because, as yet, there is nothing done in it. Again, you speak thus. 'I would observe, however, and, I think it but justice to those who may happen to see this subject in a different light from that in which I have here represented it, that should any person, on account of the *very few* circumstances in which the divine nature resembles other natures, think proper to apply the term material to *both*, the hypothesis advanced in this treatise concerning the nature of matter, which excludes impenetrability, or solidity, from being a property of it (by which, as we may say, *the reproach of matter is wiped off*), makes this to be a very different kind of materialism from that grosser sort, which, however, has been maintained by many pious christians, and was certainly the real belief of most of the early fathers.' (ib. p. 108, 109.) Pious christians and the early fathers are now apart—the question is, not what they believed, but what you believe. Let the '*kind of materialism*,' which is without solidity, of which by the way we have no evidence, be as '*different from the grosser sort*' as you please, yet, still, it is but materialism; and, on your own authority, we assert that the most refined and exalted is *essentially* the same as the grossest: and consequently the *nature* of both is the same. By this it appears we are yet in the same place we were some letters back; that is, we are left without a natural criterion, by which to distinguish the nature of the ever-blessed God from that of the grossest matter. It is to no purpose to say 'the divine nature resembles other natures but in a *very few* circumstances;' because, those few circumstances enter into the divine essence, or they do not. If they do, then the divine nature must be, so far, essentially like, or equal to those other natures; neither more or less. This makes the creator and the created one and the same nature. If they do not, if God in any sense *differs* from his works, then it must be universal; for every thing in God is essential to him, and every thing created is essential to the creature: and, consequently, there can be NO '*circumstantial likeness*' between the *necessary* nature of God and that of *created* natures. It is no less therefore than trifling with the reader to talk of '*circumstantial likeness*,' or '*resemblance*,' between God and creatures. To be sure this is '*wiping off the reproach of matter*;' but it is, at the same time, wiping

wiping out the Creator from the universe. If you chuse to exalt matter at this expence, I cannot help it; but I hope you will find no readers so completely inconsiderate as to follow your steps. 'It is only on the account of the notion 'that matter is necessarily inert,' you add, 'and absolutely 'incapable of intelligence, thought, or action, that it has 'been deemed dangerous to ascribe it either to a finite, or to 'the infinite mind; but when this *reproach* is wiped away, 'the danger vanishes of course.' Yes, sir, so it would indeed; there could be no possible 'danger' in your doctrine if it were true, because truth and safety are inseparable. Here let me drop a hint—a hint that overturns your doctrine at once. If matter be 'capable of intelligence, thought, 'and action,' it must be so naturally and essentially, or by communication. If the *former* were true, then matter would universally and continually understand, and think, and act; because, what is essential to it cannot be separated from it. My chair, my walking-cane, and pen, would be intelligent creatures as well as myself. But no author has yet proved that matter is even '*perceptive*.' (v. iii. p. 188.) This must be done before your hypothesis can stand.—However, may not the *latter* take place? that is, may not matter become intelligent and active by communication? Suppose this—who, pray, could impart intelligence to the infinite nature of God? Your doctrine, I think, involves this question; and it is addressed to your serious reflections. Without an answer to this query, your scheme must fall to the ground. Yes, sir; it is impossible to prove, in my apprehension, that God has endued matter with 'intelligence, thought, or 'action.' This must eternally remain the descriptive criterion of a nature that is *essentially* distinct, and *universally* different, from that of matter. If this assertion should appear rash and groundless to you, your further efforts to prove its fallacy will be readily considered. I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

LETTER XV.

REVEREND SIR,

I NOW pass from matter to *spirit*. I cannot help recollecting here the words of my late worthy friend the Rev. Mr. *Toplady*. They are these. ‘Bishop *Berkley* tells me, that I am all *spirit*, without a single particle of matter belonging to me. Dr. *Priestley*, on the other hand, contends, that I am *all body*, untenant and unanimated by any immaterial substance within. Put these two things together, and what will be the product? That my sum total, and that of every other man, amounts to just nothing at all, I have neither body nor soul. I have no sort of existence whatever.—Here it may be alledged, “That the two systems cannot be thrown together, as being totally incompatible.” I answer: Why may not Bishop *Berkley*’s word go as far as Dr. *Priestley*’s, and the doctor’s as far as the bishop’s? Though, when all is done, the best way, in my opinion, is, to cease from both, and to believe neither.’ No doubt, sir, but the bishop thought himself as much in the right as you do for yourself; but, one must be wrong; nay, in short, I think both are wrong; and the reader will see my reasons for my opinion. To an immaterialist there may be difficult questions proposed? and, on what subject may there not? But all difficulties are not absurdities or contradictions; and yet, except I greatly err, even these are found to clog your system of conscious, intelligent, active matter. It is but a poor relief I gain when, by getting rid of difficulty, I am involved in absurdity. This, sir, I think is precisely your case. That the reader may see and judge for himself, I shall begin this part of the subject with remarking some of the difficulties which you think attend the doctrine of a soul.

‘It is a great advantage attending the system of materialism,’ you say, ‘that we thereby get rid of a number of difficulties, which exceedingly clog and embarrass the opposite system; such, for instance, as these, what becomes of the soul during sleep, in a swoon, when the body is seemingly dead (as by drowning or other accidents), and especially

' especially after death ; also what was the condition of it ' before it became united to the body, and at what time did ' that union take place ? &c. &c. &c.' (v. i. p. 41.) The things which are here called ' difficulties ' will never affect the credibility of the truth but with such as are *too wise* to believe what is said to exceed our comprehension. And I observe that gentlemen of this cast, while they think to escape the Scyllean rock, are, generally, embogued in the Charybdean gulf. On this subject I wish to be, and am, satisfied with the proof of the *fact*, that I have a soul ; without the most distant desire to be able to solve all attendant difficulties.

That we *dream* is not denied ; and that we '*think* during ' sleep,' (ib. p. 36.) is a fact allowed. To deny it indeed would be to deny what, more or less, every one has found to be true. If we are not moral agents when asleep as well as when awake, one third of our time, at least, we must be mere blanks in the intellectual and moral world. And if our souls ceased to be, or to exist, during corporal sleep, then, every time we awake, we must become the subjects of a *new imparted* capacity for thought—that is, we must be made afresh. However strange and uncouth this thought may appear, it seems to me naturally to follow from your system. As dreaming, or thinking in sleep, is not impossible, but is known to be a fact, it ought to be received as such, notwithstanding we may find some difficulties attend it. For, though you call thinking in dreams but an ' imperfect manner of thinking,' (ib. id.) yet, still it is thinking ; and shews us that the exercise of our senses is not absolutely necessary to the constant exercise of our rational faculties in the present state of being ; and therefore leads us to conclude, by analogy, that our souls may be conscious agents when our bodies are in the dust. There is no escaping this inference but by denying that we think in sleep at all. When an author, who allows of thinking in sleep, is pleased to ask, '*What becomes of the soul during sleep ?*' it has so much the appearance of begging the question, that it might seem sufficient to reply, '*What becomes of the soul while the body is awake ?*' because one answer will agree to both corporal circumstances. And the same answer applies, with equal propriety, to the instances of '*fainting*,' and apparent '*drowning* ;' because all the difference between these corporal states, and that of the perfect exercise of our organs and senses, is merely circumstantial ; and by no means goes to

P

prove

prove that the composition of our animal frame is deranged thereby, or the union between the body and soul dissolved. The action we discover, or to which we return, *immediately*, on being awaked, or recovered from a swoon, cannot arise from matter; because it is already clear that matter is naturally inactive: and therefore there must be a present active principle, whose activity disappeared only through the defect of the corporal frame. A perfect material organization cannot *cause* such motion, though a defect may *binder* its appearance. If the state of the soul 'after death' be a difficulty, it must be so to those who either do not believe, or do not understand, the testimony of God in his word. But of this part of the subject I shall speak hereafter. As to the 'condition of the soul before its union with the 'body'—I must beg leave to refer to yourself for an account of it. You say man's 'being commences at the time of his conception, or perhaps at an EARLIER PERIOD.' (ib. p. 49.) Now, sir, if you please to elucidate this assertion, I will not only acknowledge the favor, but I really think that in doing so, you will remove the whole of the present supposed difficulty!! I know some people talk of the pre-existence of human souls—but I feel no conviction from what they say. For my own part, I am rather inclined to suppose they begin to be at the time of union with the body; let that be when it may. These are things on which I never wish to bestow a single hour's reflection; because they have nothing at all to do with my present or future happiness; nor that of my fellow-sinners. You ask also, 'At what time did the union 'of soul and body take place?' I freely reply, I cannot tell; nor do I wish to know: my business is only with the fact. That there is such an union I learn from all the evidence that reason requires, or the nature of the case admits; and I am satisfied.

'If the soul be immaterial, and the body material,' you say, 'neither the generation nor the destruction of the body 'can have any effect with respect to it.' (ib. p. 41.) I say the same; as far as the *nature* and *properties* of the soul are concerned. 'This foreign principle,' you add, 'must have 'been united to it either at the time of conception, or at 'birth, and must either have been created at the time of 'such union, or have existed in a separate state prior to that 'period.' Were I to assert that the union commenced at conception, or at birth, or neither, no man could either confirm or confront my assertion. There is no certain proof.

So

So far is this part of the subject out of the line of our enquiry, that we have nothing to do with it ; but not so the fact itself. Of this we have evidence, but not of that.

‘ If man be actuated by a principle distinct from his body, every *brute animal*,’ you say, ‘ must have an immaterial soul also ; for they differ from us in degree only, and not at all in kind ; having all the same mental as well as corporal powers and faculties that we have, though not in the same extent.’ (ib. p. 42.) This assertion seems designed to express a *natural* and *universal* sameness between men and brutes. — Now, though this is far from being a new position ; yet, still it is destitute of proof ; and so it must remain, I presume, for ever. I have mentioned a thought or two on this subject already in the light of *morality*, (R. p. 11.) but now I shall go a little further. Neither philosophy nor religion can suffer from allowing *brutes* to have an immaterial soul, or principle of action, but the reverse ; because matter is not a self-motive substance, and because these all move themselves ; from the whale and elephant down to the smallest animalcula. You assert that they ‘ have *all* the same mental faculties that we ‘ have’—but, can you, can any man, *prove* the assertion ? Then let it be done. Can they reason and invent, can they reflect and compare the past with the future, as men ? Are their principles, and motives of action, the same as ours ? Their capacities arrive at their ultimatum almost at once ; whereas a man’s powers are expanding, under proper circumstances, for twenty, forty, or sixty years. Their tract is uniform.—A sparrow never builds a robin’s nest, for instance—and so of all the rest. To say, ‘ They cannot make equal intellectual improvements with us because of a defect in their ‘ *quantity* of brain ;’ (ib. p. 238.) is precisely taking for granted what ought to have been proved ; for, if the ‘ *brain*’ is not the cause or seat of thinking, as hereafter will appear, the ‘ *quantity*’ of it cannot possibly affect the state of ‘ intellectual improvement.’ That they are not *moral* agents is too clear to admit of a moment’s hesitation—and, therefore, were this the only argument, it would fully justify a person in saying, though they may have immaterial souls, yet, they differ from us not in *degree* only, but also in *kind*. As to what you say in reference to the future state of brutes—‘ *how* and *where* ‘ they are to be disposed of ;’ (ib. p. 42.) this can be the ground of no difficulty at all, unless we suspect the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah. As he had no assistance from us in their formation and disposal at first ; so he can need none from us

in their future destination—nor is he under any obligation to answer our queries on the subject ; nor is our ignorance of the matter any dishonor to him or injury to us.

‘ Metaphysicians, who have conceived high notions of the dignity of immaterial substances, and who have entertained a great contempt for every thing material, are much embarrassed,’ you tell us, ‘ when they consider the use of the body.’ (ib. p. 43.) I really cannot conjecture, sir, why they should be ‘ *embarrassed*’ on this account.—If they are, it must be groundless. ‘ The *use* of the body’ was assigned before it was formed, and has been for more than five thousand years continually realized, independent of the choice of him for whose more immediate use it was appointed ; and therefore it is not worth our while to demurr on such an ancient established fact. The works and design of God receive no more confirmation from our credit, than injury from our disbelief—they are nobly superior to both. But, were this matter properly stated, I apprehend, the supposed difficulty would vanish at once ; except with those gentlemen who do not chuse to credit their Maker for a fact, which they think they do not comprehend.—There have been such. However, if such *rational* believers (pardon the term, sir) would be consistent, they ought to exclude both the creator and the created from their creed ; because every thing that exists hath such insuperable difficulties belonging to it as will never be removed by the highest and most sagacious of all creatures. What ‘ *great contempt* may have been entertained for every thing material,’ I cannot say ; but, if this language be designed to lament the denial of intelligence and activity of matter, I hope this will appear to be fact ; and consequently no contempt. As to the ‘ *contagion*’ of matter, I know nothing of it in philosophy or divinity ; and therefore have nothing to say about it.

We can only know the will or design of God by his word or his works. Through this medium we see clearly for what ‘ *use*’ he made the human body. No one has authority to question his *right* to make, or the *fact* of his having made, the creature man according to his own will. It is evident the body was designed, by its construction, organs, and senses, when animated, to be the medium of the soul’s *receiving* for its own use, and of *conveying* for the use of his fellow-men, all his ideas and knowledge. And, though all his knowledge of God be received through this channel ; yet, there may be the highest acts of worship paid of which the

the creature is capable in the present state, without the interference or assistance of the body. For instance, faith, love, reverence, delight, trust.—Though it is the man's reasonable service and incumbent duty to express these graces by bodily conduct, yet, if they are not seated in the soul *before* they are professedly declared by external actions, that man's religion is vain.' For this reason it is that the Lord, to whom there are no secrets, so constantly describes the moral character of man not so much by his actions as his heart. 'My son give me thy *heart*.' Prov. xxiii. 26. 'Thy *heart* is not right in the sight of God.' Acts, viii. 21. As, on the one hand, these religious dispositions, arising from the energy of the Holy Spirit, may be in the soul without external evidence; so, on the other, there may be the evil tempers of pride, envy, anger, malice—and these also characterize the man. Therefore, though all our knowledge be *derived* to the soul, *the only seat of it*, through its union with the body, yet it is not all *expressed* through that medium: which, by the way, affords a strong presumptive proof that the soul is *naturally* distinct, and may exist and act apart, from the body.

The body, you say, 'when *best disposed*, must limit the powers and activity of the soul, and can in no manner aid or assist its powers or energy.' (ib. p. 45.) Suppose the powers and activity of the soul should be *limited* by its union with the body, who is to find fault? Has the creature a right to arraign his creator? Or, is that a reason for denying such an union exists? When all creatures were merely potentially in the will of God, and had no other existence, who were to chuse their stations, appoint their uses, and lay out their different ranks and classes? If man be not an angel, or a horse a man, who made the difference? The Lord was not obliged to make man at all; but, if man was to constitute a part of his great system, surely he had an *unquestionable* right to form him as he pleased.—But, sir, allow me to put a question on your assertion. Are you a competent judge of the '*disposition*' of the human body *prior* to the introduction of sin, or *after* the resurrection? If so, we would be obliged to you for communicating your knowledge—but, if not, you must, of course, be unequal to the proof of what you assert. Please to judge for yourself and answer accordingly. As to all the '*disorders and indispositions*' of the body at present, and death at last, these are the just consequents of sin; for which reason, to name them on
this

this part of the subject, is like calling a witness into court who is a stranger to the matter in hand. For, though it be true that the soul labors under some impediments and disadvantages at present, through union with the body, in consequence of sin; yet, that does not affect the original formation and composition of man, nor his state after the resurrection; but nevertheless to one of these the '*best disposition*' of the body should be properly referred: and, the circumstances being not at all parallel, no argument can be drawn from one to the other. When I hear an author assert therefore that 'the body when *best disposed* can in no manner aid or assist the soul'—I naturally look for proof; but, as no proof is adduced, and, as infinite wisdom had a glorious design in forming man of such component parts, I am obliged to dismiss the case for want of evidence. I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V I .

REVEREND SIR,

ACCORDING to your system, it seems, 'Man is no more than what we now see of him. The corporal and mental faculties inhere in the same substance, grow, ripen, and decay together.' (ib. p. 49.) Mr. Baxter calls this '*a wilful mistake*;' (Enquiry, v. i. p. 379. ed. 2.) of which you are to judge for yourself. As far as this declaration respects *identity* of person I shall not add any thing to what is said before in Remarks, p. 19. but shall now consider it in a different light. If this language be duly considered it will naturally lead us to a thought already proved to be an absurdity—namely, that there is self-motion in matter. I need not stay to prove that man is an active being, or that his corporal actions arise from the exercise of his mental faculties—but, if his 'corporal and mental faculties inhere in the *same substance*,' and man be wholly a material being, 'no more than we now see of him,' then the inference unavoidably is, either that matter is capable of self-motion, or man is not an active being. As there is no alternative, the choice is referred, sir, to your deliberate thought. I am aware you would attempt to avoid this

this dilemma by allowing man to be a voluntary agent, and by saying that he is influenced by motives—but, on your hypothesis, this only changes the face of the argument, without affording any relief to the difficulty before us—for, if motives operate mechanically, man then can be no more than a material machine, put and kept in motion by *foreign force*, and acts only as he is *acted upon*; which entirely destroys all *voluntary agency*, and utterly annihilates all vice and virtue.

Consonant with the above declaration you tell us that we are 'just as much fatigued with thinking as with walking,' and that 'there is just the same reason to conclude, that the thinking powers are exhausted in the one case, as that the walking powers are exhausted in the other.' (ib. p. 99.) Where there is '*just the same reason*' for concluding that two things are exactly alike and equal, the conclusion must be drawn from *just the same evidence*. This, surely, no unprejudiced person will undertake to tell us is true in the present case.—Suffer me to state this matter for you, fir; and possibly it may disabuse your mind respecting it. Can a carpenter throw a tree, square his timber, and saw his plank, without tools? Can he perform these actions if his tools be blunt? No. But, will this prove that the carpenter's internal capacity is lost, or even diminished? Are his tools the *agents* when the work is performed? No. He could have done his work at that given time had his tools been properly fitted? Yes. The application of this simile is too easy to need much illustration; however, I will employ one moment upon it. When the Creator formed man it is clear, by the event, that he designed the body to be the servant of the soul, corresponding to the carpenter and his tools; but, like these tools, through sin, the body is not always in order for that action which the mind may be otherwise disposed to perform. In this wise design the various corporal members were adjusted to the several uses for which the soul might need them—the feet for walking; the hands for action; the tongue for speech; the eyes for seeing; and the brain for thinking. But they are none of them agents, or the doers of the work in which they are employed; any more than the tools of the carpenter. The eye neither sees itself, nor any other object. It is only the medium of vision to somewhat that uses it. The same reasoning would hold even of the brain itself, and indeed would universally obtain; were it not for the power of system and prejudice. It is true, the Lord appointed a more important part, in some respects, for the
brain.

brain than the feet; but this does not change the *nature* of the case; for the principle that employs them is truly inexhaustible in point of capacity for action, though at times, through bodily infirmity, he may be partially incapable of doing what he wished. Are the ears disordered? Has the palsy seized the tongue or enfeebled the hands? Be it so—no argument can be drawn from hence to prove that the soul's natural capacity depends on these members, any more than that of the carpenter on his tools; for, let the fitness of these different members for exercise be restored, and they are immediately employed as before. The brain is no more an agent in thinking, than the tongue in speaking, or the eye in seeing—being but matter, it can give no motion to itself, nor to any thing else, but is equally the servant of the mind with the feet and the hands. Every man's experience, in this case, is demonstration to him, in opposition to all the systems of philosophy. For an illustration of this, see Letter XIX. No. 1. ~~XX~~

You seem desirous of knowing *how* 'the soul accompanies the body, *how* it is contained in it, and *how* it changes place together with it.' (ib. p. 57.) All the difficulty here must lie with the materialist; because the believer in a soul denies that spirit bears any relation to space, and therefore cannot *change place* with the body—nor can it, for the same reason, be *contained* in it, for, properly speaking, nothing can be contained in matter but matter. *Accompany* the body it may, and must, while the body lives, but, *how* it does so, I have no knowledge. The great Jehovah formed such a relative union between the body and the mind as to constitute an *individual*; and, hence we say, with propriety, 'Such a person *was* here, but he is *gone*.' *How* that union was formed at first, *how* it is continued through life, and *how* it will subsist for ever after the resurrection, I cannot tell; nor am I at all solicitous to know. The union itself, as a *fact*, is ascertained by such evidence, as to supersede all reasonable doubt; and I can easily leave the *manner* of it with him who 'does all things well.' See Mark, vii. 37. No part of my interest consists in understanding *how* the Lord performs his work; but in a proper apprehension of the work after it is done. *That*, I could not understand without the capacity of God; *this*, I may perceive though only a creature; and, I am content with my station.

The mutual influence of body and soul on each other is said to be 'a *difficulty*,' and a 'mystery that we cannot comprehend.' (ib. p. 60.) This difficulty you allow yourself

to call an '*impossibility*, a *contradiction*.' A contradiction similar to transubstantiation or the doctrine of the trinity. No person has authority to declare any proposition contradictory till he is possessed of sufficient evidence to prove it. When you have been elevated to the throne of God, and from thence taken a comprehensive view of the infinite nature of deity ; then, and not till then, shall I suppose you have authority for calling the trinity a contradiction. Should you be vain enough to suppose that your thoughts are the standard of truth ; allow me to observe that you will soon be convinced that your thoughts are vain indeed ! None is a judge of God but himself ; and if his testimony be rejected we have nothing left by which to steer our course. Had the word of God, sir, said as much in favor of transubstantiation as of the trinity, your language had passed without notice ; but, when a *professed* friend to revelation can take such liberty, I am obliged to say I want an epithet to express my feelings. The authority of revelation in general, and the doctrine of the trinity in particular, will exist and triumph when all the doctrines of *popery* will be treated as they deserve ; and when all the advantages of *philosophy*, compared with the salvation of a sinner, will be infinitely lighter than vanity—I mean the day of Christ. As far as this matter refers to mystery and the trinity, I have nothing now to add to what was said upon it before. (R. p. 53, &c.)

As to the other part, that which respects the action and reaction of matter and spirit, as you chuse to express it, you will permit me to say it is a difficulty made entirely by the materialist ; for, in a philosophical sense of the terms, it is impossible that matter and spirit should *act* upon each other. Their acting upon one another I must and do deny, till *agency* is proved to exist in matter, and till a *common property* is proved to exist in matter and spirit. If any gentleman may think himself sufficient for this work, he is hereby invited to undertake it ; remembering, that, till this be done, all that is said in defence of materialism, is a mere sound of words, and stands for nothing but with the credulous. Were this subject properly stated, I flatter myself that, to an unprejudiced mind, the supposed difficulty would vanish at once. The whole proceeds, I apprehend, from a mistaken notion—namely, that our bodies and souls mutually affect each other in a mere mechanical way, by a certain sort of momentum or force, somewhat like the palate-wheel and escapement of a clock or watch ; than which nothing is further from fact, or more pregnant with absurdity. For it is proved above that, if this be a truth, there is as much virtue in a watch as a man.

Q

The

The great God having given existence to matter continues, by a relative union inscrutable to us, to dispose of the whole, and of each part, every moment, according to his own pleasure. Its being, shape, size, and place, in every possible sense of the terms, are unceasingly subject to his almighty will. And, as man was designed to wear the *image* of his Maker, his having a certain portion of the material system committed, in some sense, to his care and control for a time, as well as appointed for his use; appears to be a plan worthy of the great Supreme to adopt and realize. That the soul receives her ideas and knowledge through union with the body, and, that all the visible corporal actions are subject to mental authority, according to the constitution of heaven; may be granted—but, still the question returns, *How* is this mutual affection produced? To which, I am free to say, I should gladly receive a solid answer. I know the wisest anatomists have spoken well on the nerves and muscles, as connected with our sensation and motion; but this is far, very far, from accounting for the subject before us. Nerves and muscles are certain parts of matter wisely and beautifully arranged by the great God—and, being so, they are the instruments but cannot be the causes of motion or sensation. Sense and motion are both foreign to the nature of matter. That the soul is sensibly affected with objects through the medium of the body; that the body is affected from the fears, hopes, and volitions of the soul; and that this mutual affection arises from their union, is a fact—and, if it cannot be explained, must remain even a *mysterious* fact, however unwelcome that idea may appear to some readers. The laurel, therefore, sir, that is proposed for this exposition, awaits to adorn your brow. ‘*How* volition results from motive, and ‘*how* the motion of the hand results from volition,’ it seems, ‘are not very difficult problems’ to you. (v. iii. p. 259.) The facts are granted; but *how* they become facts I do not yet see; you are therefore requested, sir, to favor us with the *mode of operation*. I see a number of letters ranged into syllables, words, and sentences; and, by doing so, I understand the meaning of him who did it: but is it by mechanical impulse that I receive this knowledge? It will mean nothing to say, Yes—except you can prove it. And, if it be not so, then, there must be a way by which my mind may receive ideas and knowledge, through union with my body, without the medium of action and re-action; that is, mechanical impulse. Besides, if action and re-action be admitted between our bodies and souls, the same must be granted between the eternal mind and matter—which, by consequence, would exclude all mind from the

the universe. And, this, by leading us entirely into materialism, would render us unable to give a reason for any occurrence in the heavens, earth, or seas. This thought has no alternative, as I can see, but allowing that God is truly and properly a spirit—that is, an immaterial being: and then the doctrine of created mind will follow of course. Mr. Locke very justly reasons thus—‘My right hand writes, while my left hand is still; what *causes* rest in the one and motion in the other? Nothing but my will, a thought of my mind; my thoughts only changing, my right hand rests, and the left hand moves. This is matter of fact, which cannot be denied: explain this, and make it intelligible, and then the next step will be to understand creation.’ I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V I I .

REVEREND SIR,

THERE are five or six more of your supposed difficulties attending the doctrine of a soul, which I shall briefly consider in this letter, and then proceed. As,

I. In the sentence of death passed on Adam after his sin, if there be a soul distinct from the body, then, you say, ‘All the punishment that is mentioned in this sentence, is inflicted on the mere *passive instrument* of the soul, while the *real criminal* is suffered to escape.’ (v. i. p. 119.) I have no doubt but that Adam’s *body*, had he not sinned, would have been possessed of immortality; but by transgression he became obnoxious to corporal death, and therefore that sentence was righteously passed upon him. And, through federal union with him, the same sentence is executed also on millions of his posterity who never sinned after his similitude. This is a plain proof that corporal death is, *in itself*, a penal evil. But to suppose that corporal death is the whole meaning of that sentence, is contrary to the most abundant evidence by which any fact can be confirmed. For, 1. It is proved above that matter cannot *sin*; and, therefore, if there be sin in the world, there must be a separate soul: because sin is not a physical quality. If reason be a material modification, and motives the impulse of mechanical influence, the doctrine of morality comes to nothing; and death cannot be, in any sense, a sentence that supposes sin,

Q 2

but

but the mere physical effect of a corresponding cause—as the parts of a stone are separated by gunpowder. Again, as matter cannot sin, so neither can it *suffer*. Modify matter as you please no pain is felt, nor can be felt, by the change you make. Corporal death, in this view, is simply a derangement of an organized mass of matter; the separation of which is as incapable of giving pain to the particles which composed it, as the union of them afforded pleasure: both of which are absolutely out of the question. If man, therefore, be wholly a material being, there is neither sin nor suffering in the world!! What a chimera must that hypothesis be which leads to such a conclusion? 2. The punishment inflicted pursuant to this sentence, it is clear from the above, must terminate on the ‘*real criminal*,’ the soul, and not the ‘*passive instrument*,’ the body. Though the soul be the more *important* part of man, yet the body is a necessary *constituent* part. A temporal separation of body and soul therefore was threatened as a punishment for sin—sin being committed the punishment was inflicted; and death reigns by sin to this day. But as it is the soul that feels the pain of separation, and not the body; it is manifest that the punishment is inflicted on that, and not on this. The being of death in the world, as the wages of sin, for this reason, necessarily concludes for a separate soul. 3. But further, how did the soul, ‘*the real criminal escape?*’ Having rebelled against his Maker, the sinful man immediately expressed that alienation from God, and those emotions of slavish fear, which sin naturally induces; and which terminated in a vain attempt to flee from his presence. See the darkness of his mind—the perturbation of his conscience—and the pride of his heart, when cited before his offended Legislator! Is this to ‘*escape*,’ sir? This is to suffer—this is peculiar to the soul.—It is the soul, and not the body, that feels the torture of guilty fears, and is alarmed at the judge’s approach! And, 4. There is a death in sin, and a coming short, or being deprived, of the glory of God. Rom. iii. 23. We were made upright in our first father; Ecc. vii. 29. that is, knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness were the moral excellencies of human nature in its primeval state.—But, alas! ‘The gold is become dim; the most fine gold is changed! There is none that understandeth, none that seeketh after God, none that doeth good, no, not one.’ Ps. xiv. 53. Lam. iv. 1. Rom. iii. 10. If there was no depravation of heart, there could be no irregularity of manners—nor can the practice, or habits, of vice, exceed the fountain whence they flow. For the effect cannot exceed

exceed the cause. Now though such various and very different moral qualities are spoken of as in, or belonging to, the *whole man*, body and soul, yet it is manifest that, in fact, they cannot be applied but to a *rational* and *voluntary agent*; which all the world knows a material body can never be. For these reasons I conclude that the sentence passed on our great progenitor is completely unintelligible, view it in what light you please, if we have no soul distinct from the body.

II. If there be a soul, you ask, 'What occasion can there be for a resurrection or general judgment?' (ib. p. 131.) The plain answer is this—Though there be a soul, and though it survive the body in a separate state of conscious existence, yet the general judgment and resurrection are necessary.—
1. Because the soul is but a part of the man. The whole man will be included in the final sentence, whether in a state of sin or salvation; and therefore it is requisite that the whole man appear before the throne of God. 2. As the whole man, body and soul, is the subject of God's *moral government* NOW, so he will appear to be when the present form of that administration shall be succeeded with the general audit of the world. In that day, the great judge 'will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.' 1 Cor. iv. 5. The sheep will be divided from the goats—the moral, religious, and eternal states of men stand full in view; while God the judge will appear to have been, not a governor of mere animated clay, but of reasonable creatures; not of thinking conscious matter, but of voluntary and moral agents—who have been the subjects of his law and are now amenable at his bar. Without a general judgment the public character of Jehovah would not be so manifest to all his creatures as he has designed; and without a resurrection of the body, but part of the man would appear at that grand assize. As the resurrection and judgment suppose the moral agency of man, and as moral agency cannot belong to matter, however disposed, for this reason the doctrine of a soul is so far from being superseded by them, that they both illustrate and confirm it. To be consistent, therefore, sir, with yourself, I think you must either receive this doctrine of a soul, or give up the resurrection and general judgment: for, they appear to be necessarily involved in each other, and to stand or fall together. While the word of God reveals the resurrection and future judgment, it is clear that no evidence can be collected from it in favor of your hypothesis; but, on the contrary, whoever receives your system must, at least *virtually*, deny and reject the

the word of God : for, take away the moral agency of man, and the bible becomes the most useless and unmeaning of all books ; admit man's moral agency, and no man can prove, either from sound philosophy or revelation, his entire mortality.

III. Upon the supposition of a soul, you are pleased to call the resurrection '*the degradation,*' instead of '*the great jubilee of the virtuous and the good.*' (ib. p. 47.) And you do this, it seems, because you consider the re-union of the body '*a real and necessary incumbrance to the soul.*' This goes upon a mere unproved supposition—yea, a supposition I do not see you attempt to prove ; namely, That the body prior to sin did, and after the resurrection will, prove a real and necessary incumbrance to the soul, in the exercise of its faculties and the enjoyment of its happiness. So far a hindrance as to interfere with the pleasure which would otherwise be felt, and which the Lord might otherwise impart. When there is any thing in this pretended difficulty, besides the bare sound of words, it shall be considered.

IV. 'The mortality of the thinking part of man' is indeed 'thought by some to be unfavorable to morality and 'religion'—but you say it is 'without the least reason.' (ib. p. 155.) From this I must beg leave, sir, totally to dissent, for two reasons. 1. Because I cannot see how the mortality of man's thinking part, as you express it, can possibly consist with a '*sameness and continuity of consciousness.*' (ib. p. 159.) This is a problem which I am not yet able to solve. Am I a conscious agent *now* ? Shall I be the same in the *day of judgment* ? Must I not be equally conscious at *every intervening moment* from this time to that, in order to constitute a '*sameness and continuity of consciousness* ?' And can I continue to be conscious without thought, or think when my soul is extinct and gone ? You will excuse me, sir, if I refer these queries to your mature reflection ; for they really deserve attention. A certain author says, 'It is very absurd that the soul should be successively generated by every pulse of the heart, or blown up with every respiration of the lungs. A power may be inherent in, or belong to, *one certain subject* ; but that a power should be hourly produced by mechanical motion, constantly begot, constantly die, have no subject to reside in ; and be itself the subject of other powers and capacities, *as the soul of man is*, are absurdities not to be paralleled.' And, further, I must dissent from you—2. Because, before I conclude that

that my thinking part dies with my body, I must renounce all the evidence of revelation for a separate state, and reject all the experience of saints and sinners in the prospect of it. And, when I have done this, what motive can remain to engage my regard to morality and religion? I suppose no person less learned than yourself will undertake to tell me! The most evident *practical* tendency of your doctrine is this—‘*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*’ 1 Cor. xv. 32. Dr. Young, on immortality, says it is

‘A theme for ever, and for all, of weight,

‘Of moment infinite! but relisht most

‘By *those*, who love thee most, who most adore.’

It is true, this sentiment may be disputed, may be denied—and so may the shining sun; but that will prove a dreadful or delightful truth when this shall shine no more. Nothing but a guilty conscience, or a very darkened understanding, in my humble opinion, will lead a man to wish, much less believe, least of all maintain, that his soul dies with his body. See Letter V. on Annihilation.

V. It seems also a difficulty with you, ‘How persons can be said to *perish* ;’ if there be a soul distinct from, and that will survive, the body. (ib. p. 131.) Allow me the freedom, sir, and I will attempt to relieve your mind respecting this subject. As the apostle was about to establish the doctrine of the resurrection (in 1 Cor. xv.) against those who denied it; amongst other methods of defence, he argues from an absurdity, thus—‘If there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen; and if Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, we are false witnesses of God, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins, and those who are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*’—that is, if you deny the resurrection of the dead, you virtually deny the immortality of the soul, and a separate future state: for, if body and soul die together, there is no proof of a restoration, but both must *perish* together. But, if ye believe a future state, ye must believe the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the dead: for they necessarily imply one the other. This argument, used by the apostle, evidently shews me the absurdity of holding the resurrection, and denying the immortality of the soul. But more of this hereafter.

It is granted that the term *perish* is used to express the loss of an eye, an hand, and sometimes corporal life—but, as yet, I never found the text where it signifies the loss of a conscious being.

being. If there be such a passage, you will do me a favor, sir, to point it out. On the contrary, the following parts of God's word are worthy of serious consideration. Our Lord said to his twelve apostles, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, 'Go to the lost (*perished*) sheep of the house of Israel.' Matt. x. 6. And, of himself, he says, 'The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, *perished*.' Luke, xix. 10. Here, and in several other passages, the term expresses a state of moral death, in the loss of the divine image, of communion with God and enjoyment of him; in consequence of sin. And, if Christ be not risen, all those who have died in the profession of faith in Christ are yet in that state; that is, they are in this sense *perished*. For, there can be no communion with God, or enjoyment of him, either here or hereafter, but in consequence of the obedience, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again; 'God SO loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life.' John, iii. 16. And the Redeemer says, 'I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never *perish*.' John, x. 28. Here it is necessary to observe—1. The *persons* contrasted. Believers and unbelievers; or sheep and goats. And—2. The contrast of *states*. *Those* are said to have eternal life—*These*, by inference, to perish. Now as the phrase, *eternal life*, never signifies a state of conscious being only, but always a state of spiritual happiness and delight in the immediate vision of God; so, by just antithesis, the term *perish* cannot fairly be construed to design a state of non-being, or unconsciouness, but is expressive of conscious misery in separation from God, and enmity against him. And if Christ be not risen, then, all who have exchanged worlds, professors or profane, are thus *perished*, and must remain in that state for ever.

VI. It is allowed that David says, 'In *death* there is no remembrance of thee: in the *grave* who shall give thee thanks?' And many similar passages are found in the old testament. But, upon the whole of such evidence, I would beg leave to observe—1. That it is the language of the afflicted saint of God. And—2. That it is expressive of his desire to have life continued for the glory of God before the sons of men. Feeling a warm sense of grateful love upon his mind, and knowing that in the grave he cannot glorify God AS he may be helped to do upon earth; he earnestly seeks the return of health and strength that his great name might

might be exalted. As far as I have observed, where corresponding language is found, these two thoughts would explain all such passages. The *present* state is the period to magnify the riches and power of divine grace in a course of humble and cheerful obedience—the *future* is more immediately the seat of felicity ; where the wicked cannot come. Of this, the child of God is sensible—with it, he desires always to be duly impressed—and, in consequence of it, *when afflicted*, he is solicitous that life may be spared and vigor restored that his Father may be glorified.

That a believer has any apprehension of falling into a state of unconsciousness on the death of his body, no man can prove—and, yet, if it be a fact, it is strange that it was never understood and received !—But, if it cannot be proved, it is vain to receive the doctrine built upon it. There is no text, in the whole bible, that I ever found, where the soul of man, that part of man on which the image of God is stamped ; that part of man which knows and fears, which loves and enjoys God ; in which that part of man is taught either to expect or dread a state of non-existence—for, if so, it must be promised as a blessing, or threatened as a punishment. But, what happiness can I enjoy, or what misery can I endure, when I have no conscious existence ? To espouse a notion which is not only unsupported but opposed both by reason and revelation, betrays a weakness and credulity not easily paralleled. I am, &c.

L E T T E R X V I I I .

REVEREND SIR,

YOU have favored us with an account of the soul, in *long* detail, from the oriental and other authors ; and, doubtless, the public are your debtors for this labor. What is the result of all this ; but a presumptive argument in favor of the truth you oppose ? For, *who* can give a reason for the occurrence to mankind of the first thought of a soul separate from the body, if no such thing had existed ? That the philosophy of these authors was bad, in some respects, and their theology worse, has nothing in it surprizing—nor is it unlikely, nor unaccountable, that some of them might

R

teach

teach the doing evil that good might come.—But, all this apart from our subject—a soul existing, they attempted to say the best they could, perhaps; and it is no wonder they differed for want of light. Were their conceptions indeterminate, and their language various? How came it to pass that you so very closely followed them in this respect? If there be ‘*just the same reason* to conclude that the brain thinks, as that it is white and soft,’ (v. iii. p. 61.) one might naturally expect *just the same evidence* of it. At least, such evidence as would produce just the same conviction of one as of the other. But, is this to be found? However, sir, if what you say be true, it is pity you should be so loose and uncertain in your expressions on the subject. It leaves the reader at a loss to know your meaning—makes him stumble at the threshold—and gives him an occasion to suspect the *truth* of your hypothesis before he has time to examine it.

Every author should avoid ambiguity where he can be definitive. I have observed, that, when a gentleman has a favorite hypothesis to support, and he be called to criticize on some terms and phrases which particularly affect his system, it is not uncommon for him to display his critical talents in a *partial* manner. This complaint, sir, now lies against you. No doubt but warm attachment may induce precipitance, and lead us sometimes to assume what we ought to prove; for this reason I shall only state the *fact* without taxing the *design*. I have slightly mentioned this idea in my Remarks (p. 39.) on the term λογος or WORD, but now I refer to the English term *Spirit*; which is allowed to be ambiguous. It is a general word for various fluids—but, would any sober reasoner thence infer, that these things are intelligent agents; or, that, therefore there are no intelligent beings but what are material? Let matter be as subtle and volatile as possible, still it is but matter; and, you yourself allow that, the most exalted and refined is *essentially* the same with the grossest. (v. i. p. 71.) If the soul of man therefore be material, and the eternal God material, no difference how you may vary the expression, there can be no *essential* disparity between them and the grossest matter. But this is as unphilosophical as it is profane. A material first cause is tantamount to no cause at all; unless it be allowed that matter could create and modify itself. This, you know, sir, no one admits. The eternity of matter is held up as a solution of the difficulty—or, rather, this
absurdity

absurdity is offered as an apology for that. There will appear also similar cause of complaint against your use of original words ; such as (נפש) Nepheesh and Psuche (ψυχη).

That the hebrew word Nepheesh is sometimes used for *man*, the *mortal* part of man, yea for a *dead body*, is not denied ; but, to have done your subject justice, you, or your friend, should have proved that it is never used in a higher sense. Pardon me therefore, sir, if I attempt to furnish the reader with a little better view of the subject. And, I am not the less induced to do so, because you say the assistance of your 'ingenious and worthy friend is *decisive* in the case.' (ib. p. 118.) We should not shout for victory before the battle, nor triumph before the conquest. When a witness is produced in court it is not just, nay, it is not generous, to hinder him from delivering *all* his evidence—nor, to close the business till he has fairly told his tale. Now, whether the conduct of your friend, respecting these two original words, does not somewhat resemble this, the reader will judge for himself. I shall not be concerned to cite every passage in point ; because, if the terms are so used in some few as to prove their application to matter absurd, my position will be sufficiently established.

'Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my SOUL. O keep my SOUL, and deliver me : let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.' Ps. xxv. 1, 20. 'Gather not my SOUL with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.' Ps. xxvi. 9. 'I said, Lord, be merciful unto me ; heal my SOUL, for I have sinned against thee.' Ps. xli. 4. 'That the SOUL be without knowledge, it is not good.' Prov. xix. 2. I would, however, by no means cast a slight on a certain text produced by your friend, because he seems to consider it of great consequence. The text I mean is this—'The SOUL that sinneth it shall die.' Ezek. xviii. 4. Now, if this passage be understood according to your doctrine, then, a material being may be the subject both of moral good and evil—which position, if traced home, goes to prove that the holy and blessed God is neither more nor less than a material agent—than which nothing can be more absurd and contradictory. And as to the death that follows upon sin to the soul, it is proved before not to design a state of non-being, but a state of conscious misery, and that for ever ; if pardoning mercy be not bestowed in time. You are desired therefore to retreat from the shelter of your present system ; unless you chuse to abide the issue.

The equivocal use of a word should always lead us to avoid an absurd interpretation of it; because we are sure that no author could have such an idea in his intention of using it. In the following places the word *Nepheesh* is used by the Supreme Being of himself; and signifies, I apprehend, the majesty of his nature and dignity of his conduct. 'I will set my tabernacle amongst you; and my SOUL shall not abhor you.' Lev. xxvi. 11. 'These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination to his SOUL.' Prov. vi. 16. 'Behold, my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my SOUL delighteth.' Isai. xlii. 1. 'I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole SOUL.' Jer. xxxii. 41. If, on a review of this evidence, it should be still said, that this term is not used to express a nature essentially superior to matter; it must be manifest I think that hypothesis prevails to a mournful degree indeed! Nor would I forget to add, that, I trust ever to be kept from embracing that system, however recommended, which leaves no natural or essential difference between the first cause of all things and matter.

Before I go any further, permit me to ask a question.—While your friend was surveying the original of man, how was it, sir, that *Nepheesh* was selected to be 'decisive in the case,' and *Neshama* (נשמה) omitted? Is not this employed, by inspiration, in describing man's creation as well as that? Let me be favored with your patience, sir, while I briefly hint at the use of this word. It is equivocal in its application; for which reason it is proper to treat it in a manner similar to the last. In the account of creation, it is said that,

'The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the BREATH of life, and man became a living soul.' Gen. ii. 7. It is allowed that the most common, and, perhaps, the primary, acceptation of this word (*Nasham*) is *breath*; as that of *Nepheesh* is *life*; but it is a clear case that both are used, by the Spirit of God, to denote something essentially superior to animal breath, or animal life. If not, no book surely can be so ambiguous and doubtful as the bible, whose reputation you so much professedly regard. Apart from creation, this term is used of *man* in the following places. 'The SPIRIT of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.' Prov. xx. 27. 'I will not contend for ever, neither

'neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the SOULS which I have made.' Isai. lvii. 16. When these passages are analysed, or taken as they stand, I think it must discover no small share of refinement to suppose they preach the materiality of man; or that they do not, as expressly as is needful, assert the dignity of the soul as essentially distinct from the most exalted forms of matter, however modified. A refinement of which I am not possessed; and which I shall not envy in others, because of its dangerous tendency. For if this evidence goes no higher than matter respecting man, the same must be true also of his Creator; which I cannot admit. This word is likewise used of God in the subsequent places by Elihu; and are worthy of our notice. 'There is a spirit in man; and the INSPIRATION of the Almighty giveth them understanding. The spirit of God hath made me, and the BREATH of the Almighty hath given me life.' Job, xxxii. 8. xxxiii. 4. It should not be forgotten, I think, that the same original word is used in these several places as in describing the formation of the first man.

Besides, sir, had your friend been as impartial in his assistance, or you in accepting it, as the nature of the case required, he would have gone further still; because there is another term reciprocally used of man and his Maker which ought to have been considered on this question. I mean the hebrew word Ruach (רוח). It should not be concealed, however, that the more general acceptation of this term is wind, air, breath—but, if it be possible, you are desired to reconcile such an idea with your hypothesis, when it occurs in the following texts. If you can, well—if you cannot, the bible will not appear so *uniformly* and *constantly* to teach your material system as you would have us suppose.

Of *man* the word is used thus—'The Lord stirred up the SPIRIT of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation, &c.' 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22. 'All the while my breath is in me, and the SPIRIT of God is in my nostrils.' Job, xxvii. 3. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right SPIRIT within me.' Ps. li. 10. 'I commune with my own heart, and my SPIRIT made diligent search.' Ps. lxxvii. 6. 'And the SPIRIT shall return unto God who gave it.' Ecc. xii. 7. 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my SPIRIT within me will I seek thee early.' Isai. xxvi. 9. 'Now the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses flesh
' and

‘and not SPIRIT.’ Ch. xxxi. 3. If the original word, in these places, out of many, can be fairly interpreted to mean any thing material, let it be done, and it shall be considered. Respecting Ecc. xii. 7. quoted above, you are pleased to assert that ‘the word *Spirit* denotes nothing more than *breath* ‘or *life*. By the same kind of figure,’ you say, ‘our lives ‘are said, Col. iii. 3. after death, to be hid with Christ in ‘God.’ (ib. p. 129.) This argument you spoil by an unsuitable application. The text in Colossians has nothing to do with that in Ecclesiastes. Life, in the apostle’s sense of it, does not mean merely a state of conscious existence, though that is included; but an unalienable enjoyment of the divine life, which is a life of felicity, in consequence of union with Christ our head and representative in the new and everlasting covenant. When he says, therefore, that our life is hid with Christ in God, he declares plainly the impossibility of the believer’s final misery because of that union; in allusion to that life of natural happiness we lost by the sin and fall of our father Adam. Besides, if ‘the lives of good men ‘are not to appear, or be manifested,’ as you say, ‘till the ‘appearance, or second coming of Christ,’ then there can be no distinction of character, in ten thousand instances, between a believer and an infidel, a servant of sin and a follower of Christ. This assertion confounds the hope of the saint with the presumption of the sinner; and makes it impossible for us to distinguish the one from the other till the coming of the Judge. But, is there no such thing as living by the faith of the Son of God? Is not that life, a life of fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ? Does not the Holy Spirit of God witness with the spirits of the saints that they are the children of God? Are not these blessings bestowed and graces exercised *on earth, in the present day*? Thus the scripture testifies, and its testimony is true. Directly contrary, therefore, sir, to your assertion, it is clearly a fact, that the lives of good men are hid with Christ in God NOW, and appear manifestly to be so. It is true, ‘The world does *not know them*, because it ‘knows neither the Father nor the Son;’ (John, xvi. 3. i John, iii. 1.) but, when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory: that is, they shall be *openly* acknowledged to be his jewels, the objects of his love and the subjects of his grace; even those who were enabled to follow him through evil and good report, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. ‘The *spirit*,
‘qr

‘or *life*, going to God, and remaining with him,’ you add, ‘does not imply any state of perception or enjoyment.’ If so, there can be no more evidence that my soul is with God after my death, than there was a thousand years before my birth: for, on your hypothesis, when the man is dead, what is there to return to God? *Nothing*. Life is gone, and there is nothing left. According to this doctrine, there is no more importance, or meaning, in Solomon’s words, when used of a dying saint, or sinner, than when applied to a dying mite or oyster. But, this is not at all surprizing; for, the bible must necessarily be destitute of sense, in my idea of it, if the material system be true.

This term (*Ruach*) is also used of *God* in the subsequent places. ‘And the SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters.’ Gen. i. 2. ‘By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the BREATH of his mouth.’ Ps. xxxiii. 6. ‘Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy SPIRIT from me.’ Ps. li. 11. ‘Whither shall I go from thy SPIRIT? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Ps. cxxxix. 7. ‘Thy SPIRIT is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.’ Ps. cxliii. 10. It must be manifest, to the most superficial observer, that I have not employed all the evidence on this subject which the scriptures afford—but, if this part can be construed into a friendly support of your hypothesis, so may all the rest; and, therefore, I shall not enlarge it at present. That man is *flesh*, and that he is mortal, I readily allow; but if, from the use of these different terms, nothing superior is taught us to belong to him, the same conclusion also must be formed of his adorable Creator: and vice versa.

Your remark likewise on the hebrew word *Basar* (בשר), seems to me to be equally unconvincing. Every one will allow that it is used of the human body, and of animals at large; but, sir, have you proved that it is never used of any thing superior to *animal flesh*? Have you attempted it? To have shewn yourself a good workman, should you not have done this? Or, are we to credit you without enquiry? The whole you say upon it is short, and therefore the reader shall see it. ‘When the wickedness of men was so great that God was resolved to destroy them from the face of the earth by a flood, he says, Gen. vi. 3. My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is *flesh*. Here,’ you say, ‘is no mention of any other superior principle.’ (ib. p. 120.) Really, sir, I do not see how you could have selected a text,
when

when properly understood, more against your general system. For, on your hypothesis, if the term *Basar* has any meaning, it rivets fast on matter all that *odium*, *baseness*, and *reproach*, from which you are so very solicitous to have it delivered. This must necessarily follow; or matter cannot, in any possible sense, however modified, even though animated, be the subject of wickedness and the divine displeasure. And, if matter be not the subject of both, you apply this passage, in your view of it, to no purpose at all. Were there nothing odious, base, and reproachful in sin, the Divine Being could not be offended with it, or punish for it; but, seeing it is evident that both these are facts, it is necessary to conclude that man is a sinner, and that he has a soul as well as a body. Had you consulted the 12th verse in the same chapter, methinks you could not have supposed the 3d to have been friendly to your scheme. Let us hear it. ‘And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt: for all *Flesh* (*basar*) had corrupted his way upon earth.’ That the term *flesh* in your passage is expressive of human depravity, or sin of heart and life, is quite confirmed by the verse I have quoted; and, in this light, it gives the reason why the Lord was resolved to destroy them with a flood: whereas, according to your idea, I do not see any meaning in it. Let us read the text with your exposition. ‘And the Lord said, my spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh’—that is, ‘I am resolved to destroy him with a flood for his wickedness, though he is merely a material being, and destitute of any other superior principle.’ Can any unprejudiced man in the world maintain such a position as this? It reminds me of a thought of a certain person, which I shall mention—‘I most sincerely wish that the refinement of some gentlemen may not deprive them of their common sense, and a proper concern for the glory of God.’ Moreover, you will suffer me to name two places more where this word occurs. The one is, *Isai. xl. 5.* ‘The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all *flesh* (*basar*) shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ The other is, *Joel, ii. 28.* ‘I will pour out my spirit upon all *flesh* (*basar*), and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.’—Can you, sir, soberly conclude that the glory of the Redeemer is to be presented before beings who are only matter in a certain modification, and destitute of any superior principle! Matter, *see!* and see the glory of an incarnate God to its present and future felicity! Who can receive it? And *Joel’s* prophecy began to be illustriously fulfilled on the day

of

of pentecost, when the Holy Spirit imparted his miraculous gifts to the apostles. What! the Spirit of wisdom and purity pour out the gifts of tongues, and of healing, on matter! Matter, that can neither see, nor hear, nor speak, nor think! O! how far beneath the beauty and dignity of the glorious gospel of Christ is the material scheme! In short, it is as great a stranger to the existence of a *rational* creature, and the *eternal* God, as it is to that of a *saint* or a *sinner*! Rational matter is as great a paradox in sound philosophy, as sinful or holy matter is in divinity. Neither of which can enter my creed for want of evidence. I am, &c.

L E T T E R X I X .

REVEREND SIR,

FROM the old testament let us turn to the new. Here also is the same defect on your part, as before, and similar evidence on ours. Two words present themselves for examination, viz. (ψυχη) Psuche and (πνευμα) Pneuma. As to the first, your ingenious friend furnishes but one passage; as though the reader was to be convinced of your doctrine on the slightest observation. The text, with its exposition, stands thus—‘Thou fool, this night shall thy soul (thy *life*) be required of thee; that is, this night *thou shalt die*. Luke, xii. 20.’ (ib. p. 117.) And die he did, no doubt; and therefore was incapable of feasting himself, as he proposed, with the superabundance of his wealth. But, does the original word never signify any thing superior to *animal life*? Is the *extinction* of the soul, at the death of the body, so very clearly revealed in the word of God, that your friend, or you, need no further evidence to prove it? Not quite so hasty, sir, if you please; let us look, and think a little, for ourselves, before we believe. That *life* is the more general acceptation of the word is granted; but, before you had proposed this passage as decisive in the case, you should have proved, or some one for you, that it is never to be understood in a sense superior to animal life—then you would have appeared worthy of our credit, and we should have applauded your open and candid diligence. Out of many places where the word Psuche is used of *man* I will mention a few.

§

‘Take

'Take my yoke upon you and learn of me ; for I am meek
'and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your SOULS.'
Matt. xi. 29. 'For what is a man profited if he shall gain
'the whole world, and lose his own SOUL ? or what shall a
'man give in exchange for his SOUL ?' Matt. xvi. 26.
'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy SOUL.'
Matt. xxii. 37. 'And Mary said, My SOUL doth magnify
'the Lord.' Luke, i. 46. Others may be found of similar
import below*.

In the two subsequent texts the blessed *God* uses it of himself,
by the pen of inspiration. 'Behold, my servant, whom I have
'chosen ; my beloved, in whom my SOUL is well pleased.'
Matt. xii. 18. 'The just shall live by faith : but if any man
'draw back, my SOUL shall have no pleasure in him.' Heb.
x. 38. The first is the language of the Father concerning his
eternal Son in the capacity of mediator ; and the last evidently
respects the divine displeasure towards apostate professors.

So much for *Psuche*—allow me a few minutes just to men-
tion the corresponding use of *Pneuma* ; and I will proceed.
There is no person but knows that this term is used to express
the natural *wind*, in many places ; but, in others, it as evidently
designs somewhat that is naturally distinct from and superior to
it. Favor the undermentioned texts with a little attention,
and let a just judgment be formed of their import.

Of *man* the inspired volume speaks thus. 'Blessed are the
'poor in SPIRIT : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'
Matt. v. 3. 'Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temp-
'tation : the SPIRIT indeed is willing but the flesh is weak.'
Matt. xxvi. 41. 'My SPIRIT hath rejoiced in God my Sa-
'vior.' Luke, i. 47. 'While Paul waited for them at Athens,
'his SPIRIT was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly
'given to idolatry.' Acts, xvii. 16. 'For God is my witness,
'whom I serve with my SPIRIT in the gospel of his Son.'
Rom. i. 9. 'Circumcision is that of the heart, in the SPIRIT.'
Ch. ii. 29. 'Therefore glorify God in your body, and in
'your SPIRIT, which are God's.' 1 Cor. vi. 20. If the
reader should wish to see the same word in other places, he may
consult

* John, x. 24. Acts, iv. 32. Rom. ii. 9. 1 Cor. xv. 45.
2 Cor. xii. 15. Eph. vi. 6. Phil. i. 27. Col. iii. 23. Heb.
iv. 12. x. 39. xii. 3. James, i. 21. v. 20. 1 Pet. i. 9. ii. 25.
2 Pet. ii. 8, 14.

consult the foot of the page*. I would not omit, however, the only remark you have made on the use of this word. It runs thus—‘ Though it be said of the sadducees, Acts, xxiii. 8. ‘ that *they say there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit,* ‘ it is not certain that by spirit (*πνευμα*) in this place is meant ‘ the soul of a man, especially as it is said of the pharisees that ‘ they confess both, *τα ἀμφότερα*, as if there had been in ‘ fact but *two articles* mentioned before.’ (ib. p. 203.) But, sir, was it not your business to say for ‘ *certain*’ what they did mean by it? How came this to be omitted? It is pretty clear that by ‘ spirit in this place’ is not meant the infinite mind—your readers, therefore, who have fortitude enough to think for themselves, while they wait for your information, may be induced, probably, to suppose that it *must* mean some immaterial being. And, had you thought maturely of the subject, one can hardly imagine that you should lay much stress on the ambiguous term *both*.—How easy, how natural, to understand it thus?—‘ Do the sadducees deny the resurrection ‘ and the existence of spirits? The pharisees believe *both*’—that is, the resurrection and the being of spirits; whether angels or the souls of men. Though the term *both* (*ἀμφότερα*) may sometimes signify simply ‘ *two articles*,’ as *two persons*, Luke, i. 6, 7. or *two ships*, Luke, v. 7. yet, sir, you know that is not always the case; for it is used of *bottles* and *wine*, Matt. ix. 17.—of *tares* and *wheat*, Matt. xiii. 30.—and of *blind leaders of the blind*, Matt. xv. 14. No doubt but you have heard that, when a counsellor is retained, he will do all he can to serve his client; and that, a drowning man will catch at every twig.—Had you not been in a similar situation, we should hardly have found this *little* equivocal term make a part of your argument.

As to those passages where the word *Pneuma* is used of *God*, they so frequently present themselves, even to a cursory reader of his bible, that it were almost needless to name them. I will, however, just mention three or four. ‘ And Jesus, when he ‘ was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo,

S 2

* Luke, i. 80. ii. 40. xxiii. 46. John, iv. 24. Acts, vii. 59. xviii. 5. xxiii. 8, 9. Rom. vii. 6. viii. 10. xii. 11. i Cor. ii. 11. v. 4, 5. vii. 34. xvi. 18. 2 Cor. ii. 13. vii. 1, 13. Eph. iv. 23. Phil. iii. 3. Heb. xii. 9, 23. i Pet. iii. 4.

‘ the heavens were opened unto him, and he (John) saw the
 ‘ SPIRIT of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon
 ‘ him.’ Matt. iii. 16. ‘ For it is not ye that speak but the
 ‘ SPIRIT of your Father that speaketh in you.’ Matt. x. 20.
 ‘ He that shall blaspheme against the Holy SPIRIT hath
 ‘ never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.’
 Mark, iii. 29. ‘ Wherefore I give you to understand that
 ‘ no man speaking by the SPIRIT of God calleth Jesus
 ‘ accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord
 ‘ but by the Holy SPIRIT.’ 1 Cor. xii. 3. ‘ For through
 ‘ him (Christ) we both have access by one SPIRIT unto the
 ‘ Father.’ Eph. ii. 18. The reason of my troubling the
 reader with these various texts is to make this one reflection—
 namely, If the several original words abovementioned, when
 applied to *man*, are to be understood in a sense corresponding
 to the *nature of matter*; then, by parity of argument, they
 go no higher when applied to GOD—and, if so, as more
 than once observed before, *the Maker of all things is but a
 mere material agent.*

Yes, sir, I know you tell us, that ‘ nothing can be found
 ‘ in the *scriptures* to countenance the vulgar opinion, that
 ‘ man has a soul distinct from his body, except a *few* passages
 ‘ ill-translated, or ill-understood, standing in manifest con-
 ‘ tradiction to the uniform tenor of the rest.’ (ib. p. 114.)
 But, you will allow me to say, this assertion must lose its
 importance, in the eye of an impartial reader, when the
 above passages are duly considered. For my own part, I
 shall beg leave to abide by the present *translation*, and the
 present apparent *design* of these texts, till you, or your friend,
 are so obliging as to favor us with *better*; and till their
 ‘ manifest contradiction to the uniform tenor of the rest,’ be
 fairly pointed out. If this can be done, step forward, sir,
 and favor us with it; that we may see and believe. Nor
 shall I reckon the passages so ‘ *few*’ as you seem willing to
 represent them, till those adduced above be properly and
 justly shewn to have nothing to do with the subject. Nor
 can I forbear observing that, in my humble opinion, you
 were by far too hasty in declaring the ‘ observation of your
 ‘ ingenious and worthy friend decisive in the case;’ while
 you knew, or might have known, that so much remained
 to be said on the other side. This affair reminds me of a
 traditional account of a certain king. Of this monarch it
 is said, to this effect—being once in a court of justice, and
 hearing the plaintiff state the matter of complaint; he (the
 king).

king) said to the judge, ' *This man is right; give him the cause.*' To whom the judge replied, ' No, sir; before I do so, it is common, and it is necessary, *to hear the other side.*' Both sides of a contradiction cannot be right: if, therefore, it be your choice to take the place of the king, allow me that of the judge; and let the court decide between us.

No, sir; I had not forgotten that it is said of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others, that they were gathered to their people, and slept with their fathers. But because ' the ' sacred writers' did not mention a separate soul on these occasions, therefore you conclude that they had ' not any ' idea of such a thing.' (ib. p. 121.) A similar remark, I observe, is made on the conversation between our Lord and Martha respecting the resurrection of Lazarus her brother. ' Had there been a separate soul known to them,' you say, ' it could not but have been uppermost in their minds; and ' some mention of it, or some allusion to it, would *certainly* ' have been found in the history: whereas no such thing ' appears.' (ib. p. 253.) Had the subject of conversation been concerning the soul, doubtless we should have had their opinion upon it—but the death and burial of the ancient patriarchs, as well as the resurrection of Lazarus, had a sole reference to the body and their temporal connections, and were spoken of only in that light; for which reason they had not the least occasion to speak of the soul, or of its concerns. It is pity, sir, that you should need to have this thought brought up to your remembrance—but, it is much at your service. Your conduct, in this case, makes me recollect an idea which has often been in my mind—the opposers of our Lord's person and ministry were almost always DICTATING what evidence was best suited to their conviction; while they daily shut their eyes against what infinite wisdom saw right to afford them. This they persevered in doing, you know, sir, till they saw him on the cross; and, even then, they had hardness of heart enough to propose his coming down that they might believe. But, having rejected all the testimonies of his character, and of his design in appearing amongst them; this could not be granted. There he hung; and could not come down—there he hung; not only according to the scriptures, but also according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, as the atoning sacrifice of his chosen people; and, therefore, had he come down from the cross, they could not have been saved.

saved. However, it is manifest to all who observe, that the evidence they refused was sufficient to criminate their conduct, and lay them open to the rebukes of a guilty conscience and the divine displeasure. The *first* was discovered in the thousands that were converted on the day of pentecost; and the *last* in the utter extirpation of their nation and personal dispersion to the present day. See Jortin's Remarks, Vol. I. p. 222. This reflection, sir, should make us very cautious how we point out what evidence it becomes Jehovah to give us on any subject; and how we refuse the evidence we have in his word. I am, &c.

LETTER XX.

REVEREND SIR,

THOUGH what may have been said above may not be admitted by you as conclusive against your hypothesis, yet I may be allowed to consider it as collateral evidence; and, in connection with what follows, sufficient to shake your system, I would hope, almost, even in your own view of it. I assure you it would have given me no small pleasure had you been at a point in treating this subject—but this you have not regarded. For, in one place you say one thing, in a second another, in a third a different, and so on—and, on this account, the reader is at a loss how to act. 'For, if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?' 1 Cor. xiv. 8. The reason why your thoughts are so scattered and loose you can best judge; but, if you could establish *one* position of the seven which are now to be mentioned, the rest of course must be all superfluous. The variety of expression seems plainly to tell the reader the uncertainty of your mind. Though I may range my thoughts in some order on this business, I do not say it is *your* order; for the contrary will be manifest. As we must begin somewhere, I observe,

I. That, according to your doctrine, *matter* perceives, thinks, chuses, refuses, &c. for you are pleased to say that, '*Matter* is capable of sensation and thought;' (ib. p. 347.) that, '*the sentient principle in man is the brain itself*;' (v. iii. p. 191.) and, that, '*the mind, or principle of*

per-

perception and thought, is not a substance *distinct* from the 'body.' (ib. p. 355.) To assert that matter is the subject of thought, knowledge, consciousness, and so on; is the first-born of weakness, not to say the grossest absurdity. And this will appear, I think, from considering—1. That it is *not natural* to matter to think, understand, and be conscious. Before your system can be established, sir, you must prove, or some one for you, that every particle of matter is a percipient thinking substance. For, if it be not natural to matter to think, its nature must be changed before it can do so; and, should this change be made, it is no longer matter. Nothing more chimerical, surely, can enter the mind of man, than the intelligence and consciousness of a material substance; because nothing is more destitute of evidence. 'The business of thinking,' you say, 'is wholly carried on in and by the *brain*, because all the effects from which we infer the faculty of thinking can be traced to the brain and no further.' (ib. p. 49, 50.) A moderate share of unadulterated common sense would easily settle this matter for us. 'The business' of seeing is carried by the eye, and of hearing by the ear—but, neither the ear hears, nor the eye sees. What then? Does the capacity for receiving intelligence absolutely depend upon, and cease with, the eye or ear? By no means. Because, in that case, we should have no deaf or blind person in the world. And you yourself allow that 'the perceptive power remains though the eye be destroyed.' (idem.) The perceptive power, therefore, or that which perceives, on your own concession, must be *distinct* from the organs or instruments of perception. And if it be so in the *single* instance of the eye, no sober man can give a reason why it should not be so *universally*; for the vibration of the brain is no more thinking, than the motion of the eye is seeing. Besides—2. A mechanical voluntary agent is language completely unintelligible and indefensible. You may call the circulation of our blood and juices, and the various secretions of which we are the subjects, mechanical motions, if you please, because they are not controlled by the human will, and therefore are not voluntary—but, not so the motions of writing, eating, walking, and conversing; for these are all the effects of my will; and I can begin, suspend, and renew them at pleasure. For this reason I call them *voluntary*. Similar to this also I observe of my thoughts—I place them on a given subject, I recall them and fix them on another; I change them again, and again,

again, as I chuse—and, on that account also, I call them *voluntary* actions.—But no man can prove them to belong to matter as effects to a cause; and yet, without this proof, the doctrine of thinking matter must fall to the ground. It is a clear case that material motion begun, continued, varied, or suspended, must be the effect of a foreign cause. If so, the cause must be a voluntary and designing agent, or an immaterial being. I put my body, or a given part of it, in motion; I continue, vary, or suspend that motion, as I please—now, either this motion must be denied to exist, or my body must be denied to be matter, or the motion of it must be attributed to a material cause, or my soul, at whose will the motion commences and ceases, must be an immaterial being. There is no alternative. Would any man deny corporal motion, or assert that the human body is a spirit? Let us hope not. It is proved before that matter neither begins nor regulates motion—and therefore it is safe to conclude that the soul of man is not matter.

Are the vibrations of the brain *thoughts*? No more than the vibrations of the pendulum of a clock. Are virtuous and vicious *affections* material motions? or guilty *fears* and sacred *joys* the effects of the nervous system? (v. i. p. 27.) No more than they are the effects of thunder and lightning. The brain and nervous system can be no more the cause and seat of feeling and consciousness, much less of morality, than the tulip in my garden: because they are merely combinations of material particles; and neither more nor less. The impression of things that ‘agree or disagree’ would as soon, and as naturally, produce a perception of the ‘difference between truth and falsehood’ in the one as the other. (ib. p. 90, 91.) Yes; but man, though wholly material, is said to be a ‘voluntary agent,’ because he acts under the influence of motives. True; the doctrine of motives proves a man to be a rational and voluntary, but not a mechanical being; for, if man be but merely a mechanical agent, notwithstanding he may act under the influence of motives; then, of course, the great and blessed God must be so too. A motive is the final cause, or reason, why this is done, and that not done, all through the circle of rational actions. There is not a purpose in the divine will, nor an act of the divine power; but is governed by a motive. The same may be said of human conduct. On this account it is asserted that GOD is, in a strict and proper sense, A SPIRIT, (John iv. 24.) or an immaterial being; and that all voluntary agents wear, in that view at least, an image of their
their

their Maker. It is impossible to prove that material motion is the effect of a *design* in matter; and therefore it must proceed from a cause that is *naturally* distinct from, and *essentially* superior to it. One can hardly forbear smiling to hear the greatest philosopher in the kingdom compare the influence of motives, or reasons, on the human mind, to the effects of gunpowder on circumjacent contiguous bodies of matter! And, yet, this seems to be done with all the appearance of a grave disputant. (ib. p. 85.) But, sir, does gunpowder propose any *end* to itself in its operations? If not, the argument must vanish into its native—*nothing*. If reasons operate in the *same manner* as gunpowder, then man can be no more a voluntary agent under their influence, than those bodies are which the explosion of gunpowder affects; and, consequently, all *true free agency* is lost; and the language can be no longer of any possible use but to deceive or perplex the reader. When you say that ‘reasons and ideas are material things, or the affections of material substances;’ (ib. p. 86.) I can think of no more suitable answer, at present, than this query—‘How many ‘ideas and reasons will weigh a pound or fill a pint?’ Nor is this an insulting question; because, every part of matter has a certain portion of gravity, and occupies a certain portion of space. If the soul be matter, it must have length, breadth, and thickness—and the thoughts and desires of the soul, as ‘*affections of matter*,’ to use your words, may be long, round, and square—and the sensible qualities attending them may be thus—some thoughts may be green, others blue, or yellow—and so on. This is a very natural inference, and, being so, shews us the fallacy of the premises in too glaring a light for any sober man to maintain.

Your supposition of the divisibility of ideas is equally unavailing. Are our ideas drawn on our minds like the impression of a seal on wax, or a landscape on canvass? Were that the case they might be divided, and the receiver of them too, as you suggest; (ib. p. 37, 38.) but, while that is not proved, it must be denied. What is an idea of a house, a horse, or a man? Not the thing itself, surely; nor the draught of it conveyed by a limner’s brush; but an image, form, or representation of it, transmitted to the understanding—which conception, of the object presented, the soul receives through the medium of the sensory, and is called an idea. Has the brush or canvass any idea of a beautiful piece of painting after it has passed the finishing hand? Has the wax any conception of the impression it wears? Is the glass sensible of the

the charms or deformity it represents to the beholder? The same dead blank would universally obtain, were there nothing but matter in man. The sprightly *spring*, the glowing *summer*, the profusion of *autumn*, and the drear of *winter*, would all revolve in vain to man, were he possessed of no higher capacity for receiving ideas, and contemplating objects, than his passive sensory, or vibrating brain. None but a sentient principle can contemplate objects, absent or present; none besides can reflect and reason, compare and judge. Thus acts the soul of man—but, *not matter*. 'It cannot be imagined,' you say, 'how a being, which has no property besides intelligence, can make use of matter. In reality, how this substance can be sensible of it, or perceive it.' (ib. p. 73.) No doubt but this will prove an invincible argument for the materiality of the soul! But, sir, in my turn, permit me to say, 'It cannot be imagined HOW' the Supreme Being *created* matter—'HOW he *uses* it' every moment of time—nor, 'HOW he can be *sensible* of it, or *perceive* it!' Must the *fact* therefore be denied? You can draw the inference. When our imaginations are considered the *rule* of proper thinking, and the *standard* of truth; it will soon be time to forego the character of *reasonable beings*. I cannot *imagine* how such a thing can be; and therefore I conclude it *cannot* be! This, surely, cannot be your meaning. On this part of the subject, there is a thought of Pope Clement XIV. which deserves the reader's notice. 'No power,' he says, 'but the Deity himself, was capable of forming so intimate an union between an indivisible soul and a substance composed of parts, between an immortal spirit and a mass of flesh, destined to be reduced into dust, in a word, between thoughts and sensations, ideas and fibres, affections and nerves. None but a spiritual being can produce immaterial ideas. That thought which in an instant makes the circuit of the world—which, with the most rapid flight, rises even to the Infinite Being, which has neither situation, figure nor color, which imperiously commands and forces the body to obey its orders—tell me *how* it can be a part of that same body?'—That the soul is possessed of ideas and keeps them, amidst all the super-vention of corporal changes, is a fact; and a fact which can be no more shaken by our ignorance than confirmed by our knowledge.—That the soul receives all her ideas and knowledge through union with the body, is granted—but, can the mode of operation be described? Then, let it be done.

done. If not, shall our ignorance be supposed to overturn the fact? If ignorance would justify, or apologize for infidelity, in one instance, for the same reason it would in one thousand—and so on the contrary. The doctrine of the resurrection is received as a *fact*; but who will undertake to say *how* it is brought about? That the archetypes of ideas, or the objects of which ideas are representations, may be divided, no one denies.—The several component parts of a house, for instance, may be contemplated together, or apart; but not without ideas of the several parts in a state of separation, and of the whole when united. The divisibility of ideas therefore, in your statement of it, and from thence the divisibility and extension of the soul, is taken for granted, instead of being proved; and consequently the argument built upon it is of no validity.

True, sir; 'we have a very imperfect idea of what the *power of perception* is,' or, rather, we have none at all; because, strictly speaking, an idea is the image of an external object, which the *power of perception* is not: and, therefore, 'this very ignorance ought to make us cautious 'in asserting' what we cannot prove. (ib. p. 26.) But certain we are that this power of perception, or what in man perceives, cannot be matter; and, therefore, amidst all our ignorance, we conclude it must be mind. It is said that 'consciousness, apart from inference, affords no evidence of 'a separate soul.' (v. iii. p. 280 to 288.) But, by the way, does consciousness, apart from inference, prove any thing to the contrary? No, sir; by no means. Consciousness therefore is at least a presumptive argument in our favor. For it is impossible to prove that matter is a conscious substance; but that man is a conscious intelligent agent cannot be made plainer than it is. Consciousness and intelligence are equally estranged from matter with attraction and repulsion. These are not essential properties of it, no more are those. An error in the premises necessarily leads to an error in the conclusion. If God may have ideas of his creation, and if 'intelligences superior to men' may have and retain ideas without a repository in which to keep them; (ib. p. 93.) one should suppose that it must follow, by a very easy transition, that the soul of man might do the same, as to the *nature* of the case. But, if man cannot, the consequent conclusion is so plain I need not name it. Upon the whole, it is very evident, I think, that matter neither is, nor can be, a percipient intelligent substance.

11. The next article I shall mention is to me equally unintelligible and unsupported; and leaves the question just in the same state as before. Or, indeed, if there be any difference, makes it more abstruse and intricate. 'Whatever matter be, I think I have sufficiently proved,' you say, 'that mind is nothing more than a *modification* of it.' (v. i. p. 355. v. iii. p. 240.) So far have I been from finding this '*sufficient* proof,' of which you speak, that I have not been able to find even so much as the shadow of it: and, yet, I have perused your books with some degree of attention.—What shall I do in this case? Whatever matter be, you tell us you have sufficiently proved that mind is nothing more than a modification of it! Strange language! Whether matter be this thing, or that, or the other, it seems there cannot be any difference, for the soul is but a modification of it! And if the mind of man may be a modification of matter, so, by just consequence, may the *infinite mind* that originally created matter out of nothing, and now perpetually keeps it in existence. A modification of matter exist prior to matter itself! What a wild, extravagant thought! And, yet, how can the materialist avoid it? A hot-headed *divine*, in the warmth of dispute, and captivated with an overheated zeal for his nostrum, might jump to his conclusion, without proving his premises—but one should hardly expect any thing like it in a cool sagacious *philosopher*, who calmly and cautiously tries every inch of ground he treads, and never draws his conclusion but from the surest premises, and never asserts but from the clearest evidence!! But, sir, after all, what is matter? Should not this question be answered very explicitly, and with as much precision as possible, before such an assertion be admitted? No doubt of it. What is matter, then? It is a dead unthinking substance; and all possible modifications can never change the nature of it, or make it what it is not in itself. For, what is a modification of matter? Why, nothing but a *manner* of being; and subject to an infinite number of changes, while the *nature* of matter is still the same. Under the last article we were told that the soul was matter itself—now it is a modification.—What, sir, is my soul the *manner* or *mode* of material being, and matter too! Can it be both? A *modification* of matter think, reason, reflect, sin against God, enjoy his pardoning smiles!! What *philosophy*! What *divinity*! I should understand your doctrine every whit as well, if you told me that motion was green, or that sound was square;

as when you say that mind is a modification of matter. Excuse my dulness, sir, for I am not ignorant by choice. If you are right, I would gladly know your meaning, and readily adopt your creed. Again,

III. Here I am to consider the subject in a different view still. 'There is just the same reason to conclude,' you say, 'that the powers of *sensation* and *thought* are the necessary RESULT of a particular organization, as that *sound* is the necessary result of a particular concussion of air.' (v. i. p. 28.) Can all these things be true, sir? Now, the soul is matter—then, it is a modification of it—at another time, the result of matter in a particular arrangement of parts! How credulous must the man be who receives this doctrine? and how implicit his confidence in his master! If both these conclusions are founded on '*just* the same reason,' it seems natural to expect they should be founded on *nearly*, if not *just* the same evidence—but, alas! nothing is further from being proved. To recite such an assertion is to confute it! We all see and know that *sound results* from a particular concussion of the air; but where am I to find just the same reason for believing that my soul results from the organization of my corporal particles? The evidence respecting sound is so manifest, that no one is disposed to dispute it; whereas the evidence for the other is so obscure, or rather not found at all, that the supposition is an outrage on common sense. However, for the sake of argument, let us suppose, not allow, that your remark is true—what then? Can it be proved, that sound has sensation and thought? If not, for what imaginable purpose can the pretended correspondence of a human soul and sound be introduced? For my part, I cannot conjecture; unless it be to shew us how words may be used without ideas. For, such is my infelicity, that, though I have read and thought it over, again and again, still I feel myself incapable of receiving any knowledge by it. And, indeed, if the soul be nothing but mere matter, there can be no great occasion to vary our language on the subject.—It is mere matter: and there ends the business. But, such a diversity of terms seems plainly to tell us that the author is not at a point in his own mind. If the soul be the *result* of matter modified, be so obliging, sir, as to say how speech or writing can be the means of conveying intelligence to my understanding. Might it not be as rationally concluded that speech would transmit conceptions to a sound as to my mind? With what propriety are motions or writing substituted in the room of speech to a deaf man? Were there nothing but the *result* of matter, to apprehend our meaning, would it not be as proper

proper to make motions, or present writing, before the sound of thunder as a man? Besides, what *natural* and *necessary* connection is there, between the sound of words or motions, and the meaning of the person who writes or makes motions to us? Were that the case, all language and motions would be immediately understood. These things are the result of mutual agreement only; and do not rise up naturally out of the writing or motions. But, can sounds agree to understand each others meaning by any given medium? Moreover, it is to be remembered, that, what is not true of matter, as *matter*, is not true, on this question, of any modification of it, nor the *result* of such modification; because, however its particles may be arranged or organized, its *nature* is still the same. And it is an eternal truth that the effect cannot rise higher than the cause. Mr. Locke very justly says, 'It is as impossible to conceive that ever bare incogitative matter should produce a thinking intelligent being, as that nothing should of itself produce matter.'

True, sir; I know that aqua regia will dissolve gold—and that gunpowder will separate the parts of solid bodies—nor can these effects be produced while the component parts are in a state of separation.—But the *result* of such compounded bodies, or any others, can never be pertinently introduced, on this business, unless it can be proved that either in their *nature* or *operations* they are parallel to, and correspond with, the nature and operations of the human soul. When this is done, we shall be glad to know it. If matter be not *universally* percipient, conscious, and intelligent, it is not *naturally* so; and, if it be not so by nature, it cannot be so at all. Change its shape, size, and place to infinity, it is but a dead passive substance still; nor can the *result* of any possible combination or organization of its parts be raised to the rank of a conscious voluntary agent. I am, &c

L E T T E R X X I.

REVEREND SIR,

HITHERTO we have considered matter simply as matter. Now, if you please, we will name another view of it which you have given us, different from the preceding—namely,

IV. As

IV. As *animated*. Under this branch of the subject to be sure we shall find the evidence of your general system. Here you tell us that, 'By man becoming a living soul, nothing can be understood besides his being made alive—the property of life being superadded to the corporal system, made a complete living man.' (ib. p. 116.) If this be all, we gain no ground yet, I perceive. For, on this principle, a living man is only matter in motion, and a dead man is matter at rest. The soul is *life*, you say,—a living soul, and living man, being with you synonymous language. But, if this be true, there is no difference between a man and a mite in your cheese, or an oyster in his bed. One is possessed of the same capacity for mental attainments and moral character as the other, and to an equal degree; because each has *life*.—Indeed, sir! and can it be proved that *life* thinks, reasons, fears, hopes! Then where lies the difference between the greatest philosopher and the completest idiot! To what purpose does the sun shine into an empty house? The beautiful wainscot, or expressive tapestry, can receive no knowledge through the intervention of his rays.—I know it may be said, '*There is no LIFE*'—but life, were it present, is only a principle that invigorates the frame, and renders it subservient to the will of the man; while it is, in itself, as far from consciousness as the eye or the ear. After all, what is life? You say it is a *property*, and the property of thinking necessarily attends it. (ib. p. 125.) So that one property accompanies another property, and, for ought appears, another property may attend on them, and so on!—Is this accurate reasoning? Nothing has no properties. What has properties must be substance. To say the property of thinking *attends* the property of life, is saying nothing; unless it could be proved that life is a substance that supports the property of thinking. If this can be done, I am ready to hear it. And, in that case, every time life is imparted to an animal fœtus there must be a *new* substance *added* to the material world; and, as often as life is taken away, there would be a substance annihilated. But, this involves such confusion, that no man can soberly maintain it. The *nature* of the substance and the property must correspond. Thinking, therefore, if it be a property or faculty, must be the faculty or property of a substance whose nature is cogitative; unless you will allow that the substance and property may essentially differ.

Life.

Life, or an animated body, is no more the subject of thought than the chair on which I am seated; nor indeed can be.

Yes, sir; I know you tell us that 'the term substance or essence is only a help to expression not conception. That without powers substance is nothing. And that when powers and properties are withdrawn, all idea of substance vanishes.' (v. iii. p. 104, 106, 352.) Let it be supposed, if you please, that we have no idea of substance abstractly, yet still substance and properties should not be made to mean the same; because they are, in some sense, distinct. Were they not to be conceived of distinctly, the properties might as well be said to support the substance, as the substance the properties. Which is as contrary to good sense as it is to sound philosophy. The difficulty which attends a distinction between the substance and its properties, is not so much in the thing itself, I apprehend, as in the shallowness of our capacity. Our comprehensive faculty is not equal to a subject so abstract as this. The nature and being of things should not be measured by such a standard as ours. Our attempting things beyond our line is the ground of much false reasoning, and many false conclusions. Besides, the term *power*, or *powers*, when given to matter, is inaccurate; though used by philosophers. For, what idea does the term convey? Doubtless a capacity for action; which it is known, and allowed, that matter has not. A capacity for action cannot be known but by action; and no one can prove that matter is an agent. Again, every agent must be a living voluntary being; which matter is not. Nor is animal life a property of matter; for, you tell us, it is '*superadded*' to it. Life is adventitious, therefore, and not natural to matter. The addition of life does not affect the matter of the human body, nor belong to it as a property; because the substance of the body is the same whether life be absent or present. From all which it is very manifest that thinking is *not* a property of animal life; or an animated body does not comprize the whole of man. It is allowed, that it is only in union with a *living body* that we discover the being and use of our mental faculties; either in the acquisition or communication of knowledge, in the present state—such was the will of our great Creator.—And it is only in proper union between an organ well tuned and a young gentleman, that the latter acquires and displays his skill in that branch of music. But, who would from thence infer that, 'they are one and the same thing?'

(v. i.

(v. i. p. 28.) When you are pleased to *prove* this to be true of the human body and soul, as well as *assert* it; I think any one may engage to prove the same of the organist and his organ. Let us now proceed,

V. To another manner of expression; where I find that of organized system introduced. 'The powers of sensation or perception, and thought, as belonging to man, have never been found but in conjunction with a certain *organized system of matter*,' you say, 'and therefore those powers necessarily exist in, and depend upon, such a system.' (ib. p. 26.) How soon is this asserted! I would it were as easily proved! But, alas! what shall we do? That an organized system was the appointed medium of ideas and knowledge to the soul, has been allowed—and that all our mutual intercourse on earth is carried on through the same medium may be granted—but, sir; does your conclusion naturally and unavoidably follow? Perhaps not. It is said, 'A *whole* brain may think, but *half* a brain is incapable of it.' (v. iii. p. 63.) One can hardly read this assertion without smiling; for, what is a whole brain? It is only a certain number of material particles beautifully organized, or placed in a peculiar order, by the Creator, and then animated or put into motion. And what then? Why then, as Mr. Locke says, 'Unlinking particles of matter, however put together, can have nothing thereby added to them, but a *new* relation of position, which it is *impossible* should give thought or knowledge to them.' Impossible indeed! because the *nature* of each particle is just the same as though they were a thousand miles asunder. For all the new relations which can possibly take place between the matter of the whole globe will never change its *nature*. If matter be an unthinking substance in one place or position, it will remain precisely the same, in every other, to eternity. Prove that matter is naturally cogitative and intelligent, and you do the work at once, sir; but, till then, every thing else is merely beating the air: and, indeed, the next article to be mentioned, seems to intimate that you are conscious of this, and therefore I shall not enlarge the present. Let me observe then,

VI. 'The brain,' you say, 'besides its vibrating power, has *superadded* to it a percipient or sentient power likewise.' (v. i. p. 91.) However crudely this be expressed, it lays your Babel all in ruins, which you have taken so much pains to erect, and fully justifies my denial of your materiality of man. An argument may be soon lost by granting too much

to an opponent. If the percipient or sentient power be *super-added* to an organized system of matter, as you teach; then, what is thus *superadded* cannot be matter, nor a modification of it, nor the result of organization, nor life that animates the frame. And, what is there left?—1. It cannot be *matter*; because it is *superadded* to it.—2. It cannot be a *modification* of it; because however matter may be placed, or however its form or size may be varied, such change or changes cannot *add* any thing to its native constitution.—3. It is not proper to say that the *result* of any given combination of matter is a *superaddition* to it; because what naturally and necessarily follows from any peculiar arrangement of material particles, cannot be said to be *superadded* to it. Nor—4. Will your language agree to *animal life*; because you yourself say that this percipient and sentient power is *superadded* to ‘the vibrating power of the brain.’ You know, sir, there are no vibrations of the brain *prior* to life, nor *after* death.—This vibrating power of the brain therefore supposes life; and, consequently, the soul, which is *superadded*, must be distinct, and may exist apart, from it. Thus you see, sir, your own authority confounds your argument, and confirms *mine*. Annexed to this I shall only subjoin,

VII. Your appeal to the power of God. ‘Why should it be thought not within the compass of almighty power,’ you ask, ‘to form an organized body of mere matter, so that simply by giving it life the faculty of thinking should be the result?’ (v. iii. p. 366.) This seems like a last resource, and shrewdly suggests that all other evidence fails; or it need not be named. All credit built on this question, respecting the materiality of man, is mere assumption, because there is no proof of the fact; and is but little short of downright trifling with the reader. What might not be advanced without proof or evidence, were an appeal to the omnipotence of deity to decide! But I shall give my thoughts in the words of Mr. *Baxter* and Mr. *Saurin*. The first very justly says, ‘Omnipotence is no refuge for a contradiction. And to have recourse to it, in opposition to plain reason, is a *bad sign* of any hypothesis. People think they cannot talk absurdly, if they name the Deity: though it is allowed that to perform a contradiction, is no object of infinite power.’ And the last no less properly observes, ‘To have recourse to the *power of God* is wise, I grant, if we avail ourselves of this answer to avoid our ignorance; but if we use it to cover that, if we pretend to explain every thing by saying God

is omnipotent, and can do all things, *we certainly deceive ourselves*. It is to say, I know nothing; in philosophical terms, and when, it should seem, we affect to say, I perfectly understand it.' In fine, the sum total of what you have offered in defence of materiality amounts, in my idea, sir, to—NOTHING. Such a diversity, yea contrariety, of expression, must convince the most superficial, I should suppose, or even prejudiced reader, that you have no distinct idea of the subject in your own mind; and that, of course, those who adopt your creed must believe not only *without*, but even *contrary* to evidence. Upon the whole, therefore, I think, it is evident that you have left the subject just where you found it, notwithstanding all your labor and toil; and that it is still a clear case that man has a SOUL which is naturally distinct from his body, superior to it, and that will survive it, in a state of conscious pain or pleasure till the resurrection. I shall consider the doctrine of materiality a mere utopian business, till something more deserving our notice is offered in defence of it, than has yet appeared. You ought not to believe without evidence, sir; no more should other men. I am, &c.

LETTER XXII.

REVEREND SIR,

IN this and the next letter I shall more immediately consider the soul's immortality and a future state. This subject is of too much importance to be exchanged for a system of materialism. The fears of sinners, and the hopes of saints, are too deeply engraven to be obliterated by any thing you have yet offered. To Mr. Baxter's Evidence of Reason, in proof of this point, mentioned before; (R. p. 20.) I might recommend to the reader's attention Ryland's Contemplations, Vol. I. Contempl. II. and Dr. Young's Night Thoughts, No. 6 and 7.—I said the *reader's* attention; because, it is possible that age may not have rendered him insusceptible of the impressions of truth. And I might be the more tempted to this recommendation, because, what these authors agree in saying, corresponds with the feelings of the *whole world*. If there be any

arguments to be found, either from reason or revelation, to prove no *separate state*, those same arguments, if carried forwards, would also prove no *future existence* at all. And, consequently, those arguments which prove that man will have *any future* conscious existence, must likewise establish his *constant* conscious existence. Do soberly reflect upon this thought one moment, sir; it may bear more examination, perhaps, than you may have apprehended. 'The soul's immortality,' says Dr. Young, 'has been the favorite theme with the *serious* of all ages. Nor is it strange; it is a subject by far the most interesting, and important, that can enter the mind of man. Of highest moment this subject always *was*, and always *will be*.' Immortality, at least, supposes constant conscious existence; but, according to your hypothesis, the soul being nothing in itself, when the body dies, the soul at once evaporates and is no more. So that you deny the soul's immortality even in the lowest sense in which the term can be used:

'Matter immortal? and shall *spirit* die?

'Above the *nobler* shall the *less noble* rise?'

You may reply in the affirmative, if you please, sir; but, an unfounded affirmation is not entitled to my credit or attention. For,

'Who fight the proofs of immortality?

'With horrid zeal, and execrable arts,

'Work all their engines, level their black fires,

'To blot from man this attribute divine,

'(Than vital blood far dearer to the wise,)

'Blasphemous, and rank atheists to themselves?'

That the breath of man is in his nostrils, and that his life may be taken away at a moment's notice, cannot be doubted.—Uncertain, therefore, as life is, and crowded as it is with various trials, what can relieve the burdened mind?

'Tis *immortality*, 'tis that *alone*,

'Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,

'The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill.

'That *only*, and that *amply*, this performs.'

Be pleased to survey the field of human life—trace the actions of men to their true but various sources—look at the covetous, the ambitious—turn your eye to the persecuted christian, the burning martyr, who leaves all, and suffers all, with his expectations fixed—on what? On what indeed! if his soul die with his body!! Be so obliging, sir, as to explain these different views of human conduct.

'*Eternal*

- ' *Eternal day* ! 'tis that enlightens all ;
- ' And all, by that enlighten'd, proves it *sure*.
- ' Consider man as an *immortal* being,
- ' Intelligible all ; and all is great ;
- ' A chrytaline transparency prevails,
- ' And strikes full lustre through the human sphere :
- ' Consider man as *mortal*, all is dark,
- ' And *wretched* ; reason weeps at the survey.'

Yes, sir ; even *suicide* itself is no mean proof of man's immortality. For, why does a man assault his own life ? Not because he believes that the next moment he shall *cease to be* ; but under the vain presumption of being *better*.

— ' I grant the deed

' Is madness ; but the madness of the *heart*.

' And what is that ? Our utmost bound of *guilt*.'

Allow yourself a moment, sir, to sit down and observe the lower classes of creation ; and you will find that health and food comprize the whole of happiness to them.— They look no further : they want no more. Not so, *man*. Give him all the treasures, honors, and gratifications of the universe—he is only enriched to be poor, honored to be wretched, and gratified to be miserable. He is far from God, the source of happiness—he has rebelled against him, and has a guilty conscience—is always seeking, but never finds the place of rest. And, even the blessing of pardon itself, when bestowed, is so far from making the soul completely happy, that it only creates a greater thirst and warmer desire to possess the fountain whence it flows. ' My soul, quit thy dust ! Anticipate these periods of felicity, ' and say with Moses, *Lord, shew me thy glory* ! O Lord, ' shorten the time that separates us.—*No man can see my face and live*. Well ! let us die then,'—Not die to become non-entities for thousands of years ; but die to enjoy his smiles in a higher and nobler manner than the present ; and be, at once, beyond the reach of woe or want. Nothing but God in Christ can fill the soul of man with rest and peace ; either in life or death.

Some of the doctrines of christianity more immediately appear to be destitute of all meaning, if man have no soul distinct from his body. All the doctrines of revealed religion indeed most evidently harmonize in *nature* and *design* ; but now I shall only name some of them. It is proved above that matter cannot sin ; and therefore it is useless to talk of *pardon*—for where there is no sin there can be no liability

liability to punishment. It is equally unimportant to mention *justification*, or *sanctification*, or the *death* and *resurrection* of the Lord of glory, with various others which might be named : all, all are insignificant words and empty sounds ; if man have no soul. In short, *heaven* and *hell* are two of the most unintelligible words in the whole system of language, according to your doctrine. On the contrary, however, nothing is more manifest than that all the blessings of grace are treasured up in Christ for his people ; and that all these blessings are actually bestowed on them who are chosen in him.—Nothing can be more clearly proved than that heaven and hell are the finally appointed states of men.—And, to the truth of all this, the feelings of mankind bear testimony. But all these things go to prove the immortality of the soul—and its immortality testifies that it is distinct from, and superior to, the body ; which, at most, is but matter animated. Whereas, if this be not a fact, if man be wholly a material mortal being, the whole becomes a thing of nought. On the one hand, our feelings, in this respect, are all merely chimerical, superstitious, and delusive ; and, on the other, the bible ought to be treated as the invention of men. But, even then, suppose the bible a human invention ; still, sir, your argument would fail ; for, who could account for what the bible contains ? It must be invented by good or bad men. Not the *former* ; for they could not be guilty of addressing their fellow-men in the style of scripture. Nor can we suppose it of the *latter* ; because it is not reasonable to imagine that men would adopt such principles of action, and propose such rewards and punishments, the truth or reality of which they disbelieved and denied.—And yet, this, all this, and much more, must be done, according to your system. This is but a very imperfect view of that ocean whence your scheme proceeds, and whither it naturally returns ; for which reason you are requested to survey it with attention, and retreat in season.

True, sir ; the scriptures do hold up to our view, in a very striking yet pleasing point of light, the solemn transactions of the last day ; when the righteous shall be received into the ultimate vision of God, and the wicked banished into endless misery—but, is there any evidence, or even hint, that the misery of this, or the joy of that, shall *not* commence till that period ? This, you know, sir, should not be supposed, or merely asserted ; but, if you wish to establish

establish your hypothesis, it should be clearly manifested and sufficiently confirmed. Suppose truth has been abused, must it therefore be rejected, or lightly esteemed? Strange thought! Were we to give up every doctrine that has been abused, we should have nothing left: not even the being of God. All truth must be banished from the earth. Let *purgatory* be held, and all its absurdities received—is there no way to refute that empty sound, but by sacrificing truth? Then let it stand for ever—or till the Lord Jesus Christ confounds it with the brightness of his coming. When you assert, that ‘there is no hint concerning the *nature or use of an intermediate state in the scriptures;*’ (ib. p. 50.) the language discovers to me as much weakness or inattention, as *purgatory* does wickedness and opposition. May both fall before the evidence of truth, that the Lord *alone* may be exalted. Can any thing be a more glaring assumption than to assert that there is no *hint* of an intermediate state in the scriptures? Perhaps not. It is allowed they are not so diffusive and large in their evidence on this subject as some others; but, nevertheless, it will appear, I apprehend, that your assertion is as groundless as it is positive.

There may, and I suppose there will, be *somewhat* preserved by the great Jehovah to make it as truly MY body, after the resurrection, as before it died. Let that somewhat be called germ, or stamen, or any thing else; I shall not dispute the term if you allow the fact. But as the body, or what died and was buried, was not the conscious intelligent agent here, either directly or indirectly, no more will it be hereafter. The resurrection of the body therefore affords no proof of future knowledge and consciousness; or the least remembrance of past temper and conduct. The soul does not exist, upon your hypothesis, in the intermediate space from death to the resurrection; for which reason there can be no subject of consciousness after death, nor will the resurrection produce such a subject; because the resurrection is only a revival of the body that died and was buried. If therefore there will be found, in the day of judgment, a conscious and voluntary agent to render an account of his past life to the Judge; it must be such an agent as recollects his actions and motives. This cannot be said of the body, because it never was a conscious being; but of the soul this may be safely asserted: and, a soul admitted, the whole is plain and easy. If your scheme be
true,

true, at the resurrection there will be as many souls *created* as there are bodies raised; for, while the body remains in a state of death, the soul has *no* existence: on which account, if there be any souls, they must, *at that time*, be brought into being, and be as ignorant of the past as they are unacquainted with the future. In that day every thing must be to learn by us as much as when our bodies were first formed. I see no way for you to solve this difficulty but by proving that matter always necessarily thinks and is conscious; or by receiving the doctrine of a soul and a separate state. The resurrection, if properly stated, confirms, in my idea, by very clear evidence, the immortality of the human soul, in the fullest sense in which, at present, I wish to be understood. Besides,

This subject may be further illustrated and established, I think, by a little attention to the instances of resurrection mentioned in the book of God. Let it be observed—1. *That* these persons had lived long enough to be intelligent and to know their connections—2. *That*, when raised from the dead, no ignorance, nor even forgetfulness, of former acquaintance appeared in them. All their former friends they instantly knew again, without enquiry or trouble. Which proves that they had neither lost, nor lessened, their knowledge of objects without them. But, had they been in a state of non-existence, pardon such inaccurate language, there is no reason to conclude that this would have been the case; but strong presumptive reason against it. While these several instances of resurrection go to prove the adorable glory of Christ, and attest the truth of christianity; they afford no mean proof, from experience, that the soul survives the body in a state of consciousness. And, if the soul may survive the body, and retain the knowledge acquired here, but four days, or four hours, so to speak, for the same reason it may four thousand years or ages. This retention, or remembrance, cannot be predicated of any thing in man, upon your hypothesis; for it is only a certain *part* of the corporal frame that will be raised, and not *all* the several particles which composed it, at different periods, whilst on earth. This part, be it what it may, was not the thinking power; and therefore the resurrection of it cannot ensure a conscious remembrance. Now, whether this stamen, or germ, or what you please to call it, be compounded, or an individual atom, you have not told us.—*If the latter*, the soul cannot be the result of it; because

you

you say the soul results from the organization of parts—if the former, still the soul must want the subject of which you say it is the property. So that, either way, your revival of the body is a stranger to the work of final judgment; because your system knows not where to fix the seat of consciousness and remembrance. Once more,

There must be a soul, and a separate state, because it is as necessary for the man to know *himself*, as to know another. This cannot be supposed, and that excluded. But it is manifest that matter has no knowledge; either of itself or any thing else. Look at the saint before the throne of God—an essential part of himself, according to the constitution of heaven, is his body. It is necessary therefore that he *know his own* again, when raised from the dead. When he died he committed his dust to the care of Israel's keeper, in humble hope of having it restored at the sound of the trumpet; and has been in the exercise of faith and pleasing expectation of enjoying the promised blessing ever since. He could not witness the accomplishment of the faithful word, and his own desire, without knowing his body again; nor could he know it without a soul; nor could he have lived in a believing expectation of the day, if he had not been in a state of conscious existence. This idea, opposite as it is to your professed system and positive assertions, is not destitute of evidence in the word of truth.

Let us consult *Job* on this question. He says, 'All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.' Ch. xiv. 14. You allow this text to declare Job's faith in the resurrection. (ib. p. 127.) *Waiting* for an event, not only includes a belief of its coming to pass, but a continuance of that disposition till the event be realized. The body cannot wait, dead or living, and yet Job waited—and said he would continue to do so till the desired blessing was possessed. *All the days* of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Now, had Job's whole man died and been laid in the grave, there is no possible sense, that I can perceive, in which he could have been said to wait for the resurrection of his body. He has been dead, I suppose, near four thousand years. If the whole man die, there is neither remembrance of the past, nor expectation of the future; and yet waiting implies both, and must run parallel with them. And this also necessarily presupposes a constantly conscious intelligent existence. A soul, therefore, and a soul *now* in the exercise of faith on the promise and power of his Redeemer, appears to me to be very

clearly taught us in the ancient language of this great man.

The apostle *Peter* says, speaking of Christ, 'Whom having not seen ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. Must the faith that is exercised on the Son of God, the unspeakably glorious joy that is felt in the exercise of this faith, all drop and cease at death? Must there be a dead blank in the believer's experience, for thousands of years, while his body rests in the grave? How then can the great *Shepherd* be said to give his sheep *eternal life*? How can the indwelling and work of the *Spirit* be called a well of water *springing up into everlasting life*? If there be such a chasm, then, in your sense of the term, the believer *perishes* indeed; notwithstanding all the promises of God, the grace of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit, to the contrary.—Who, that believes the testimony of heaven in the sacred page, can receive this? When Paul was writing to the Corinthians he says, 'Death is yours.' 1 Cor. iii. 22. And to the Romans he declares, 'I am persuaded that death shall not be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Rom. viii. ult. I know it may be said, 'In the morning of the resurrection the interval will not be perceived, it will all appear but as the transition of one moment to another.'—But this would be saying nothing; because, how it may *appear*, is not the question.—The true question is, 'Will there be any real interruption of the exercise of grace and enjoyment of God from death till final judgment and glory, or will there not?' If *not*, there must be a separate state of conscious existence. If you say there *will*; I must leave you to reconcile the assertion with the word of God. One, or the other, you know, sir, must give way; for, both sides of a contradiction cannot be true. The inspired Paul says likewise of himself and brother apostles, Rom. viii. 23. 'We groan within ourselves, *waiting* for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.' By the redemption of the body, I apprehend, is meant the resurrection. Nothing of this exalted blessing seems equivalent to the wish of the humble but earnest expectants. And they waited for it under the sacred teaching and prevailing energy of the eternal Spirit. Could Paul, or his brethren, from such language, be supposed to have an idea of the soul's dropping into non-existence, for he could not tell how long, before

shot /

before the enjoyment of the desired object? The Holy Spirit was promised to '*guide them into ALL truth*;' John, xvi. 13. and if this be a branch of truth, it is more than strange that we find so much said against it and nothing for it!!

Listen to the expiring *thief*—'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Luke, xxiii. 42. Can any sober man allow himself to suppose that the thief understood the kingdom of Christ to mean an unconscious state, and that he desired the Lord to remember him there? But this necessarily follows upon your entire mortality of man. Nor does it appear that he had a more distant period in view than the death of the Lord of glory. Without an intermediate state what an unmeaning request and reply! for, the gracious Redeemer said to him, 'Verily I say unto thee, *to-day* shalt thou be with me in paradise.' Ver. 43. I am not afraid, sir, that you will interpret this passage in favor of purgatory, and have therefore cited it as it is generally received. In paradise Paul heard unspeakable words. Paradise is a state of conscious constant employ and delight. Upon the supposition of no separate state, I do not see how the Redeemer could possibly have uttered a more obscure and delusive assertion.—It is as totally inconsistent with common humanity, as it is derogatory to common honesty. The dying criminal felt himself on the borders of eternity—overwhelmed with guilty fears and exposed to utter ruin, except he was pardoned and saved by the dying Redeemer. This the Savior knew—under this conviction the malefactor prayed; and, corresponding to it, he was answered. In which the glorious, though suffering, Jesus, appears as transcendently conspicuous in his compassion, as he does resplendent in his integrity. '*TO-DAY shalt thou be with me in paradise.*' Cheering promise! Reviving cordial! The Redeemer would know the thief, and the thief would own his Lord, in paradise; or neither would know that the promise was sure. If this passage has any meaning at all, it is an irrefragable testimony of a separate state of conscious existence. I must refer the remainder of this subject to the next letter. I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXIII.

REVEREND SIR,

WHY should there be a difficulty in supposing the souls of men to exist in a *separate disembodied state*, any more than the existence of angels who never were embodied? You may call this state 'a receptacle,' (ib. p. 30.) or what you please; but, if you admit the existence of these, why deny the existence of those? Should you deny the being of angels, we shall be ready to examine what you say upon that subject also.

There is one text on this part of the present question which you have so superficially considered, and so strangely expounded, as to make it completely destitute of sense and truth. The text is—'Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.' Matt. x. 28. Your exposition follows. 'But when we consider,' say you, 'that according to the uniform tenor of the scriptures, and especially our Savior's own discourses and parables, there is no punishment in hell till after the resurrection, it will be evident that his meaning could only be, that men have power over us only in this life, but God in the life to come; meaning by the *soul*, the *life*, and in this place, the future and better life of man in opposition to the present.' (ib. p. 130.) Now, sir, if you please, we will read the text with your exposition. By the *soul* you say the *life* is meant. Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the life: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and life in hell. What a speech for unerring wisdom to express! Do not they who kill the body destroy the life? To be sure they do. And, if there be a *future and better life*, as you say; then, neither body nor life, if I may speak so, can be destroyed in hell. Permit me therefore to refer the passage to your second thoughts; for, at present, you have not made it speak *sense*. And, if by the *soul* we are to understand the *life*, it is equally void of *truth*; because it is impossible to kill the body and save the life.

'Had the sacred writers really believed the existence of the soul, as a principle in the human constitution, naturally distinct

‘distinct from, and independent of, the body, it cannot but be
 ‘supposed,’ you say, ‘that they would have made some use of it
 ‘in their arguments for a future life. But it is remarkable,’
 you add, ‘that we find no such argument in all the new
 ‘testament.’ (ib. id.) And, is it not equally as ‘remarkable,’
 sir, that if you had not attempted to explain away the obvious
 meaning of the text just mentioned, it would have been a
 swift witness against you? And, yet, if it can be understood
 fairly in any other light, suffer me to call upon you to point
 it out to us—if not, it stands against you still. I would also
 name another passage. See Matt. xvi. 26. ‘For what is a
 ‘man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his
 ‘own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his
 ‘soul?’ The term soul here cannot mean the life; but that
 principle in man which is the subject of knowledge and hap-
 piness. That happiness and knowledge which the world can
 neither acquire nor impart. But more especially, that know-
 ledge and happiness of which the gospel of Christ is the medium
 under the sacred energy of the Holy Spirit. If the soul be lost,
 that is, if a man die a stranger to the knowledge and happiness
 of gospel grace, the *whole world* cannot repair the loss, or
 bring him to the abodes of heavenly glory. In this case he
 dies beneath, of his numberless transgressions, and for ever
 feels the horrid pleasure of a holy and righteous Judge. This
 is another instance where the argument for a future life is
 founded on the soul. But, I proceed.

According to our Savior’s discourses and parables, you
 tell us, there is no punishment in hell till after the resur-
 rection. If this doctrine be found in our Savior’s dis-
 courses and parables, and especially if it be according to
 the uniform tenor of the scriptures; pity, sir, but you
 had proved your assertion, or, at least, made some effort
 towards it, then we might have been disposed to have
 regarded you. But we so often meet with unproved asser-
 tions, and more positive declarations, that we are tired of
 them. According to your doctrine also there can be no
 happiness in heaven till after the resurrection—but, I sup-
 pose, the case of the rich man and Lazarus was not in your
 memory when you penned this positive assertion; and there-
 fore you will excuse me if I wish you to read Luke xvi.
 19—31. There you will see that, Lazarus died, and was
 carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom—that, the rich
 man also died, and was buried—and that, in hell he lift up
 his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off,
 and

and Lazarus in his bosom—&c. Now, whether you consider this part of scripture a history, or a parable, the doctrine it teaches is the same—for, as history is a *narration* of facts, so parables are no less *founded* on facts; or suppose them possible. I would not have you overlook this passage, because it is in point; and deserves your serious attention. You will remember, sir, that it is a part of one of our Savior's discourses, if not a parable; and, if not a parable, it is a history of two real characters, which I am inclined to believe is the truth. You will not find the least hint towards proving that the soul is absorbed or extinct at death; but just the reverse—and, it should not be forgotten, our Lord never taught contrary or opposite doctrines. On the death of the rich man, and of Lazarus, you are told, *immediately*, that the one is carried to Abraham's soul, the other is in torments in hell. That Abraham, the rich man, and Lazarus, are conscious intelligent agents in that state, is manifested from all the circumstances related; and it is equally clear that the whole refers to a separate state; because the rich man had brethren yet alive, and, because Abraham said, if they rejected the testimony of God's word, they would not believe if one rose from the dead. You can examine the evidence of this scripture another time, and favor us with your thoughts for our further reflection.

The instance of Stephen and his Master are also worthy of your notice in this business. The dying Redeemer said, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my *spirit*.' Luke xxiii. 46. And the dying martyr prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my *spirit*.' Acts, vii. 59. When I read these passages of scripture upon your principle of reasoning, I feel the want of a friend at my elbow to explain their meaning; for they appear so obscure and unintelligible to me that I cannot understand them. No doubt but the speakers had a meaning—and a meaning correspondent to their then important circumstances—but I really cannot see it. For, if by the *spirit* nothing but *life* be meant, as you teach, what could their design be? What is the life of a dead man; or life extinct? It is—*nothing*. What then had the Lord to receive from his servant Stephen? NOTHING. What did the Savior commend into the hands of his Father? NOTHING. See, sir, how unmeaning and useless some of the most solemn and interesting parts of God's word are, on your system of exposition! Turn the other side, and every thing

thing is beautiful; because big with sense and meaning. Here you behold a holy man yielding up his life into the cruel hand of persecution, because he would not renounce or dishonor his Lord and Master. Nor is it without emphatical meaning that the exalted Jesus so displays his glory in that trying hour! While thus suffering for Christ, how was the good man supported by him!—‘I freely give my life to the rage of men; Lord Jesus, do thou receive my soul.’ That will soon be gone, this must live for ever; therefore I yield it up to thee—to thee, from whom it came—to thee, the source of bliss—to thee, the keeper of Israel—to thee, my portion for ever.’ And the Lord of glory said, when expiring on the cross, ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit—Holy Father, I come to thee.—I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.’ John, xvii. 4, 5. Will any bold man in the world undertake to reconcile such declarations of sacred writ with your doctrine, or your doctrine with them? But, if they cannot be reconciled, your doctrine must leave its disciples in a miserable plight when their breath expires.

I shall mention some few texts more briefly, and hasten to finish this part of my design. That of the *atonement* will follow. Let us hear *Selemon*. ‘I praised the dead who are already dead, more than the living who are yet alive.’ Better is the day of death, than the day of one’s birth.’ Eccles. iv. 2.—vii. 1. But, I should be glad to know, wherein the day of death can exceed that of birth, or the dead be preferred to the living; if there be no soul to survive the body? While alive we enjoy the pleasures of knowledge, and taste the sweets of friendship—while living the believer has fellowship with the saints and is admitted to communion with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ; and, at times, rejoices in hope of the glory of God.—But, if the soul become extinct at death, all is dark, as dark as death! Is this to exceed the living! Believe it who can? The prophet *Isaiab* says likewise, ‘The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.’ Ch. lvii. 1, 2. By the terms *Perishing*,
Taken

Taken away, &c. we are evidently to understand, I apprehend, dying out of the present world; and, I think, it is equally evident that the other parts of the holy prophet's language must refer to an immediately succeeding state of conscious felicity and delightful activity. For, can a person be said to *enter into peace*, and *walk in uprightness*, when he does not exist? Moreover,

Would you read a proof of the soul's perception and pleasure when apart from the body? Give me leave to refer to Paul's rapture into the third heaven. 2 Cor. xii. 1—4. He does not say indeed that his body and soul were disunited, but declares he could not tell how it was—however, his language clearly goes to prove, in my humble opinion, that the soul is capable of converse with the Father of spirits when the body is no more. And, would you know his own expectation at the dissolution of his body? Hear his words. 'I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' Phil. i. 23. Be with Christ? When? After two or three thousand years! Would that be better? No verily; neither for himself, nor for others. Is it rational to suppose, that the apostle had such an idea in his mind? Nothing less. 'For,' as a late writer says, 'most certain it is, that it would have been better for the churches of Christ, for the interest of religion, and for the glory of God, if he had remained on earth to this day, and so on to the second coming of Christ, than to be sleeping in his grave, receiving no benefit to himself, nor being of any use to others.' No, sir; the great apostle had no idea of falling into a state of total death, but of enjoying the smiles of his Master and Lord immediately on the death of his body, till the morning of the resurrection; and so on for ever and ever. It was with this in view he could boldly say, with Nero's bloody executioner at his right hand, 'I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.' 2 Tim. i. 12.

The passage you quote from the Revelations I suppose refers to the vision which John had of the risen saints at large, and of the martyrs in particular, sharing the honors of the thousand years reign with Christ on earth, before the second resurrection.—It is easy and natural therefore to conclude that he saw them not as '*unembodied souls*,' but '*living men*.' (ib. p. 131.) But, had you been willing to collect any evidence from that prophetic book, you should

not

not have omitted the following text. Rev. vi. 10. ' I saw
 ' under the altar the *souls* of them that were slain for the
 ' word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And
 ' they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord,
 ' holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on
 ' them that dwell on the earth ?' This evidence, you know,
 fir, should not have been passed over when the other was
 named, because they are both of equal authority. This seal
 seems to refer to the times of *Dioclesian*, the latter end of the
 third and beginning of the fourth century ; for which reason
 there could be no resurrection included. These souls were in
 a separate state ; and are represented as expressing a zealous
 concern for the display of the divine character in the sup-
 pression of persecution and the peaceful spread of the gospel
 of salvation. This text being the word of God as well as
 that which you are pleased to recite, with others already
 mentioned, is recommended to your cool deliberate reflec-
 tions. To hear a gentleman assert that there is *no hint* of
 the nature or use of an intermediate state in the scriptures,
 when such passages as those above can be adduced to the
 contrary ; leaves one at a loss what to say.—One would
 not be so uncandid as to impute it to ignorance, much
 less to any thing worse—but it must have a cause. Such
 evidence of a future intermediate state however there is ;
 and, I suppose, more might be collected were it requi-
 site—but, for the present, let this speak for itself. Rem-
 p. 25—30.

It appears, then, fir, upon the whole, that, if man be
wholly a material being, his Maker must be the same. And,
 if there be no soul distinct from the body, nor separate
 state, all that is said about vice and suffering, virtue
 and happiness, morality and religion, all, all is speaking
 in the clouds, the whole, from first to last, is labor lost.
 It is making much ado about—*nothing*. I am, &c.

Y LETTER XXIV.

LETTER XXIV.

REVEREND SIR,

BEING come thus far in my design, I intended to have taken up the *atonement* simply on what you had said about it in the volumes I have been considering—but, just in this juncture, an opportunity offered of my reading your '*History of the Corruptions of Christianity*,' and I have done it. Had I seen that book sooner probably I might have referred to some passages—but I see nothing to induce the least alteration in what I have said—plenty, however, there is to confirm me in my opinion that your idea of christianity is but a distorted figure of natural religion. And I am also confirmed in the remarks I made on your account of Paul's conduct in writing to the church at Thessalonica. I mean Letter III. No. 1. You tell us (*Corrup. v. ii. p. 359.*) that, 'it was the maxim of *all* the heathen philosophers, 'to think with the wise, and act with the vulgar. But that 'no true christian, or protestant, will venture to sacrifice 'so much to their worldly ease and safety.' Pray, did our great apostle make *any* sacrifice of truth at all to his worldly ease and safety? If he *did*, let it be pointed out to us that we may know our man.—If he did *not*, then—but I leave the inference with the reader.

Yes, sir; the corruptions of christianity, in its *discipline* and *worship*, are too true to be concealed, and are cause of lamentation. Nor is there any doubt but that its *doctrines* have been debased in a similar manner. It is with *these* and not *those* that I am now more immediately concerned. For, if the doctrines of christianity are to be considered in the light in which *you* chuse to represent them, there must have been sad departures from the truth indeed! But, I apprehend, that, before these letters are finished, there will appear to the reader more than probable evidence that, what you call the *corruptions* of christianity, are the essential beauty and glory of revealed religion. If it be not so, the world lies in darkness of a truth: and such darkness as cannot but excite the pity and compassion of every liberal mind. I am yet far from being convinced that your ideas correspond to

the

'the truth as it is in Jesus.' Eph. iv. 21. And, if they do not, very few indeed, can be further from it. The 'plainness of the doctrine' is its dignity; and by no means an objection to the grand principles of christianity being called '*a system*,' (ib. p. 440.) for, if union, order, and harmony in the several parts, constitute a system in any science; christianity affords a reason why its various branches, when considered as a whole, should be so described.

Referring to the deity of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, and to the atonement, you are pleased to say—'I am sensible that it would be in vain to urge any external historical evidence of a revelation, of which such doctrines as these should make a part. They are things that no miracles can prove.' (ib. p. 461.) This remark is so completely empty of argument that I can hardly persuade myself that you are serious in using it. The proper design of working miracles is not to '*prove doctrines*,' but to attest the *authority* on which the doctrines are founded. No unprejudiced man will judge so much of the authority by the doctrines, as of the doctrines by the authority: and so of miracles. If therefore the miracles are proved to be wrought by a supernatural power, this will attest the divine authority of the bible; and this establishes the ground of our faith in the doctrines it contains. And what that temper ought to be called which sets at nought any doctrine which comes thus recommended to us, I must beg leave to refer to your own conscience. Except you class the miracles of Christ and his apostles, of Mahomet and Rome, all together—except you rest these doctrines on a similar kind of evidence with 'Mahomet's journey to the third heaven and transubstantiation;' your observation must appear so full of *sarcasm*, to every sober mind, as not to deserve a refutation. And, if this be your meaning, then, to be consistent with yourself, as you reject the *authority* of the turk and the papist, so you ought likewise to reject the *authority* of God; and for the same reason. Especially if it be as you say, that Mahomet's journey and transubstantiation are *not* 'more absurd, but much more innocent,' than the doctrines of christianity of which we speak. For it is in the highest sense absurd to suppose that infinite wisdom, purity, and truth, should ever work miracles to attest and establish an authority by which useless, unreasonable, and even pernicious doctrines are recommended to our credit and cordial esteem. Such as Mahomet's journey to the third heavens and transubstantiation;

of which you say they are not more absurd but much more innocent, than the glorious doctrines of revelation for which we plead. Is this language consistent with a *defence* of christianity? Impossible! And, of this you will very soon be convinced! According to your strain of reasoning, if reasoning it ought to be called, ALL the doctrines of scripture ought to be discarded as well as *some*; because the AUTHORITY is *one*. The *resurrection*, which you receive, is not founded on superior evidence nor higher authority, than the doctrine of the *atonement*, which you reject. Nay; the *former* is only mentioned as it were passing, when compared with the *latter*. This cannot but be obvious to every reader of his bible. To reject one doctrine of revelation therefore is, *virtually*, to reject the whole; because the authority of God in his word cannot be divided. You would do well, sir, to reflect upon this thought maturely. I am sorry to see revealed religion so much exposed, by a professed friend, to the scorn of infidels. All your addresses to *unbelievers*, however penned, must necessarily prove abortive, while you go upon your present principle; unless you could persuade men to do what you yourself leave undone. They see the bible to be all of a piece; and, for *one* reason, dare reject the whole together. Awful, however, as their conduct is, it is more *consistent* than receiving one part and denying another. God is equally the origin of each doctrine his word reveals; and therefore it is no better than solemn trifling to select and defend what suits a pre-concerted scheme, and then reject and oppose what we think militates against it. This goes upon a supposition that the blessed God is 'such an one as ourselves;' (Ps. l. 21.) which will very soon be found a delusion. There is one text which I would beg leave to recommend to your serious attention, with the most cordial concern of genuine friendship. It is this—'He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, *because* he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.' 1 John, v. 10.

I know, sir, that much is said about REASON—nor would I wish to undervalue, nor misplace it. But reason is not the *cause* of our knowledge; nor ought it by any means to be a *dictator*. Reason exists *within* us, as a capacity for knowing; and the will of God in his word exists *without* us, as the means of knowing; the salvation of sinners. When such a book is put into our hands, a book professedly from heaven, the only province of reason is to ascertain its *authenticity*. Having done this,

this, and being satisfied that it is the testimony of God, it withdraws and leaves the man to receive, and even justifies his receiving, the sacred record. The bible declares nothing but *facts*.—On which account Paul was not afraid to ‘submit his assertions and arguments to the examination of his readers.’ (ib. p. 365.) Had he not been an ‘inspired apostle and received his knowledge of the gospel from Jesus Christ himself;’ (idem.) no doubt but he would have acted the part of those who obtrude the doctrine of implicit faith—but he knew that truth would bear examination, and that no harm could *naturally* arise from the closest investigation of its declarations. He only said what his Master taught him, and rested easy respecting himself; recollecting that ‘he who despiseth, despiseth not man but God.’ 1 Thess. iv. 8. If men will set up reason to the exclusion of faith, they must bear the blame. However, it ought to be remembered that the resurrection is no more to be understood, accounted for, or explained, by reason, than the atonement or the trinity. You are not to be told, sir, that philosophy never taught the resurrection—nor did philosophers, *as such*, ever receive it. Hence the Athenians *mocked* the preacher of it; and others have *denied* the fact. It is purely a revealed truth. If reason therefore is to be our guide, and we would act the part of consistent, impartial enquirers after truth, each of these doctrines ought to be received, or the whole denied—for it signifies nothing to say, ‘The *more* extraordinary any thing, any event, or any proposition, is, the *more* evidence it requires;’ (ib. p. 479.) because these things are *equally* ‘extraordinary,’ and their ‘evidence’ *equally* valid. Properly speaking, they stand and fall together. Pope Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) very justly observes, that, ‘Reason without religion, like those luminous exhalations which rise in the bosom of night, enlightens only to lead to the brink of some precipice.’ Corresponding with which I may safely assert, that, reason without acknowledging the authority of scripture, is a very unsafe guide in matters of religion. I never understood, nor am I yet persuaded, nor inclined to believe, that, faith in God’s word is to be regulated or assisted by the rules of philosophy, or mathematical demonstration. ‘The errors of infidelity,’ says Ganganelli, ‘take their rise from bestowing the attributes of theology upon philosophy, and proposing that theology, like mathematics, should prove by demonstration.’ If we receive nothing as divine truth but what reason must first understand, be able to explain, and authenticate it to us; we really

really shall believe just nothing at all.' And, yet, we are not required to believe without a reason. That reason is divine authority.—This authority is more than equal to our highest trust, and perfectly indemnifies our reliance and confidence. Our faith in it, and expectations from it, can never be attended with shame or disappointment.

Here it is natural to ask a question.—Is it *your* reason, sir, or *mine*, which is to decide and direct without or contrary to scripture? This matter should be settled. And, when you are *disposed* to do it, we hope for leisure to attend you. In what *state* are we to consider this said reason? As it appeared in our great ancestor *before* the fall; or as it is found *now* in his posterity? In *him*, while innocent, it could only see things *as* they were presented, and receive them on the *authority* of his Maker—in *us*, if we are not strangely biased and blinded, we must soon perceive that reason is not sufficient to guide us to future happiness. This must be allowed, or revelation be denied. There is no alternative. On that account reason ought to bow to God's authority in his word, let him say whatever he will. Even where divine grace appears to have quickened the dead sinner, and to have sanctified the powers of his soul, and to have led him in some happy measure to contemplate eternal things in a proper light—I say, even in him, reason is subject to divine testimony; he knows nothing of himself; he cannot be said to believe without evidence; nor can he reject what his bible reveals, in any given instance, and yet be guiltless. As the Spirit of God never taught one prophet or apostle to contradict another, either in faith or preaching; so he never teaches one believer to receive and another to reject, or even to slight, any given part of his written word. All his teachings are uniform and harmonious. Yes, sir; it 'requires something more than *eyes*, 'capable of distinguishing the *words* of scripture, to enter 'into their real meaning.' (ib. p. 471.) If not, every one who reads the *words* would, of course, directly understand their *meaning*; and then we should be all of one mind and of one judgment.—This, at present, is very far from being the case. That '*something*,' however, is not *reason*—nor *philosophy*—nor any branch of *literature*—for, were it so, there must be a greater union in human views of divine truth than there appears to be. But, it is that divine *illumination* which the Savior bestowed on his apostles after his resurrection before he ascended to the majesty in the heavens.

It

It is recorded, you know, sir, that '*be opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures.*' Luke xxiv. 45. They had the scriptures, and could read the '*words*' before, as well as after; but till then they did not, nor could they, '*enter into their real meaning.*' Nor was the case of the apostles by any means singular; every man in the world on whom the same blessing is not bestowed, is in the same situation. This is the *occasion*, but not the *cause*, of all the corruptions of christianity, which ever did, or now do, obtain in the world. And, yet, this darkness is not innocent, because it is voluntary.

The apostles being assembled at Jerusalem on the question about circumcision, in their circular letter to the gentile believers, mentioned the words which you cite—'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us.' Acts, xv. 28.—On which you have this remark—'They probably only meant,' by these words, 'that they were fully persuaded that the regulations which they prescribed were proper in themselves, and therefore agreeable to the mind and will of God; being conscious to themselves that they were under no improper bias.' (ib. p. 337.) Allow me, sir, to put a question here. By what *rule* were these regulations proper in themselves? By what *authority* were the apostles fully persuaded they were proper? And, *how* did they know they were under no improper bias? These are not impertinent questions.—Should you say, This was all done by their own reason—then we should be led to conclude that the laying aside, or not introducing, of circumcision among the gentiles, was founded, not in the *authority and will of God*, but in *human reason*—and then we might as well say that circumcision *originated* in human reason. But you can answer for yourself. Though, indeed, if you allowed this, one could not be much surprized; because you say that if '*the whole tenor of scripture cannot be accommodated to the dictates of reason, the former, and not the latter, should remain unaccounted for.*' (Corrup. v. i. p. 278.) So that if any part of God's word should happen to prove unacceptable to the dictates of our reason, *reason* is to take place of *divine authority*, and become our guide and the ground of our faith!! Is this the sentiment of an author who has spent the greatest part of his life in the *study and defence* of christianity? What, then, can we expect from a deist, a pagan, an atheist! Can christianity be understood, embraced, defended; by an appeal from the bible to reason? A child can judge. 'Nay, there is nothing more reasonable, than to hearken to the voice of unerring
wisdom

* *wisdom* and infinite *authority*, with an *implicit* submission and an *unsuspecting* reliance.' You tell us that 'Time may clear up obscurities in particular texts by discovering various readings, or by the clearer knowledge of ancient customs and opinions.' (idem.) Suffice it to say, that, the patrons of *reason* in opposition to divine *authority* in the bible, have, no doubt, exerted all their power, in seventeen hundred years, to find out every possible various reading. At this time of day therefore nothing is to be expected from that quarter. And, it pretty strongly suggests a consciousness of distress and dilemma attending your scheme, to have any expectation from it. 'Yet,' as Dr. Doddridge says, 'if the fact could be authenticated, it is such an one which no man of common sense and honesty can seriously urge against the *authority* of scripture.' And, had we the most perfect knowledge of ancient customs and opinions, that could not in the least support the credit, or augment the authority, of divine revelation; for, if so, our faith would then stand, not on the *will of God*, but the *opinions and customs of men*. At this avenue entered all papal corruptions of christianity—and your insinuations, if pursued, would terminate exactly in the same point. Do they appeal from the bible? You do the same. And yet you profess to explain and defend it! This is strange conduct! I am, &c.

LETTER XXV.

REVEREND SIR,

I SHALL now bestow some thoughts on your view of christianity—the whole design of which is an opposition to the atonement of Christ. It is acknowledged, that to be a christian a man must believe some *facts* that are of an extraordinary nature. (ib. v. ii. p. 455.) So far we agree. In this case however the man does not believe the *how*, but the *truth* of the fact. The sole ground of his faith must be *testimony*. (ib. p. 456.) All the facts which that testimony includes, therefore, if he would be consistent, he is bound to receive. To receive one fact, and reject another, is weak and repugnant. Repugnant even to good sense and reason. If the testimony be valid, he ought to *regard*

all its report with equal credit; but, if not, to *reject all* with equal disdain. This is clear to every man. Where reason, with all her powers, can no more explore the modus of one thing than another, if two or more are proposed, she ought to justify faith in receiving all on *testimony*. And, if she be not blinded or perverted, she will do so. Where one such fact is received, the *validity* of the testimony is acknowledged; and therefore to reject another part, founded on the testimony that we acknowledge, is doubly weak and repugnant. The reader will easily perceive that I now refer to the *resurrection* and the *atonement*. The first you believe to be revealed; and I shall endeavor to prove the same of the last. The one is no more addressed to our reason for explanation than the other; but both to our faith to be received as facts.

Did not the atonement of Christ appear with considerable light and evidence in the sacred page, even in your view, one can hardly account for the various efforts you make either to supersede or explain it away. Nor is it a little manifest that you seem embarrassed with this doctrine by the several different ways by which you try to evade it. But, why so multifarious, sir? God's way is *ONE*—and, if you were in the truth, would not yours be so too? No doubt of it. It is clear, therefore, that your diversity must prove ineffectual for accomplishing your design. There are five or six things dispersed in the five volumes I have read, which I shall take the liberty to call your *evasions* of the atonement; and try to range them in some order for the reader's inspection. But, you know, sir, if either of them could be established, the rest would become superfluous. You know the old adage—'What can be done by few, or by one, need not be done by many.' Let me name, as the

I. Evasion, *The resurrection*. This occurs more than once. 'The resurrection,' you say, 'is the proper fundamental article of christian faith.' (Dis. v. i. p. 123.) There is a sense in which this is partly true; but not exclusively so: for all the articles of christian faith are connected with it. On this point Paul discovers himself to be no less a master of argument than zealously attached to revealed truth. Both these appear in a very conspicuous point of light in 1 Cor. xv. But then it is not in such a sense 'proper' and 'fundamental,' as to exclude other articles from being equally so; because it is but *one* link of the golden chain. Had not

Christ rose from the dead according to the scriptures, all the prophets and apostles had been found false witnesses of God. But, seeing he did so, all the doctrines connected with it are confirmed and established by it; and he who receives *one* ought, for that reason, to receive *all*. Nor is the doctrine itself, nor 'our having an interest in it,' in the least 'weakened by that opinion that represents him as of a nature superior to our own;' (Corrup. v. i. p. 22, 177.) but nobly supported and confirmed. The death and resurrection of a mere man would never be adequate to my salvation.—But, of this hereafter. No one believes that the divine nature could die—or that the divine and human natures in our adorable Immanuel are confounded the one with the other. You know, sir, that this is not held by us; nor, indeed, is it proved by you, nor even attempted; and yet your language seems to suppose it. We believe that his resurrection is 'a pattern and pledge of our own'—not because we believe that the divine nature died, nor because we are so united to the Son of the Father as the human nature of Christ is—but, because he was 'made in all things like unto his brethren,' Heb. ii. 17. There was a '*necessity*' for this conformity. This necessity arose from the sovereign will and covenant engagements of Father and Son before the world began. Nor did his being the true God and eternal life supersede his corporal sufferings and death—nor was it designed to do so—nor could it at all affect the nature, manner, nor end of his resurrection. The whole of this amazing plan is perfectly easy to infinite wisdom and infinite power. Though his human nature was peculiarly united to deity, yet it was, properly speaking, human nature still. You know, sir, that this is our view of the subject, and on what evidence, or whose testimony, it is that we receive it.—To which we refer your second thoughts. But, if you are gone beyond instruction, or are not disposed further to examine the sacred records, we must beg leave not to be your companions. The deity of Christ no more interferes with or contradicts his resurrection, than the resurrection of every believer in him. 'The exceeding greatness of divine power was displayed in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Eph. i. 19, 20. The same power must be exerted in our resurrection; and neither more, nor less, nor otherwise. For, as he condescended to be made like unto his brethren; so, likewise they shall be made like unto him. It is exceeding foreign therefore, nothing can be

be more so, to suppose that the deity of our glorious Redeemer is at all incompatible with his corporal death and resurrection.

It is to be lamented that any author should be partial, or inattentive, when considering a subject so important as the present. How your following assertion may appear to others, I cannot say—my ideas of it I shall freely mention. ‘This doctrine of a resurrection to immortal life,’ you say, ‘and the making an express regard to it the principal sanction of the laws of virtue, is not only essential in the christian scheme, but is an advantage peculiar to christianity.’ (ib. p. 176.) This looks as if you expected to be saved ‘*principally*’ by believing the resurrection. The idea you have now given us seems to be your grand *fact* respecting the resurrection in the room of the *atonement*; and, therefore, if this should appear untenable on a fair investigation, I hope you will surrender without further resistance. If the subject be properly stated, I apprehend the basis of your argument will prove defective; so defective, that the whole structure must fall to the ground. Christianity is neither more nor less than a revelation of pardon and salvation to the guilty sons of men; with the reason why, and manner how, the blessings are bestowed. As such, it is a stranger, a total stranger, to all penal ‘*sanctions*.’—I say, *penal sanctions*; because, all sanctions, in reference to moral conduct, imply a penalty in case of disobedience. If you do not mean the law of God, by the ‘*laws of virtue*,’ I have nothing to say to it in the present question. And, if you do, then you confound the law with the gospel; or, rather exclude the last for the sake of the first. The law of God never promised a ‘*resurrection to immortal life*’ to any creature—no such promise can be produced. Nor was the enjoyment of it suspended on the creature’s obedience, nor the non-enjoyment of it threatened as a punishment of disobedience. As this is the case, what you have asserted is of no weight at all. The law of God commands perfect, perpetual obedience; and, ‘*the man who doth these things shall live in them.*’ But, on the other hand, a voice from heaven says, ‘*Curse is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*’ Gal. iii. 10, 11. From this short, plain view of the matter, it is evident that a resurrection to immortal life cannot flow, in any sense, from the laws of virtue; for, had not sin been committed, death had not existed, and consequently

no resurrection had been necessary or possible; but, sin being in the world, death justly follows. And though the sinner shall be raised from the dead, by the power of God, yet it is only to the resurrection of damnation. John, v. 29. Our hope of a resurrection to immortal life, if well founded, does not rise from the laws of virtue, but from the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; as the covenant head and representative of his church and people. A greater discovery of partiality and inattention could hardly be found, I suppose, than appears in the following instance. 'If the death of Christ had been a proper sacrifice, and the forgiveness of sins had depended upon it only,' you say, 'we should hardly have found the *resurrection* of Christ represented as having had the same use, as Rom. iv. 25. He was raised again for our justification.' (ib. p. 191.) But, by what rule of fair criticism or interpretation, sir, could you possibly omit the former part of this verse? Did you imagine that the reader would take your word implicitly? Let us read the whole verse, as we ought to do, and then we shall see, not that the resurrection of Christ superseded his death as a sacrifice, and as the ground of our forgiveness, but, that it is consequent upon, and a confirmation of it. The whole verse says, *expressly*, that Jesus was 'delivered for our OFFENCES, and then was raised again for our justification.' Your own evidence, you see, sir, overthrows your cause; for, the passage thus brought forwards, shews us very clearly that our forgiveness flows through his *sufferings*, and NOT his resurrection. It is the direct way to lose your credit with your readers, except they are excessively biassed in your favor, to be thus partial in quoting scripture; and, it pains me to be obliged to correct your inaccuracies in this public manner; but a defence of truth demands it. I would wish you to be more attentive in future, for your own sake, as well as for the sake of truth, because the reader must see that the part you omit is the very part you should have mentioned. Now I go to another article, and that is what I call the

II. Evasion. *The preaching of the gospel.* Concerning this you speak thus—'Repentance and the remission of sin are said to be preached in the name of Christ. Luke, xxiv. 47. Acts, xiii. 38. And all who believe in him are said to have remission of sin. Ch. x. 43. But this phraseology is easily explained,' you say, 'on the idea that *the preaching of the gospel* reforms the world, and that the remission of sin is consequent on reformation.' (ib. p. 205, 206.) An assertion, and

and exposition, less supported with *evidence*, I suppose, can scarcely escape the pen of any writer. Is there more enormous *vice*; are there more dangerous *errors*, in the whole globe, than Great Britain. So far, sir, is the preaching of the gospel, from *reforming the world*! It is true, when the 'gospel comes' 'not in word only,' as Paul speaks, 'but also in power and 'in the Holy Ghost;' 1. Thess. i. 5. then, indeed, reformation ensues, and more than reformation—but this flows from a far nobler cause than simply preaching the gospel; though preaching be included. And, in this view of the matter, there is a sense in which remission is consequent on reformation; but not as an effect is consequent on the operation of its cause. A man while dead in sin is a stranger to remission in *experience*; nor can he be acquainted with it, in this sense, while in that state: but, when the Holy Spirit of truth has made him alive, and brought him to love and walk the ways of wisdom, then, and not till then, does he taste the sweets of pardoning mercy. This is abundantly testified in Paul's mission to the gentiles. The gracious design of Christ in sending him to them was this—'to open their eyes, and to turn them from 'darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, *that* 'they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them 'who are sanctified by faith in Christ.' Acts xxvi. 18. This evidence, I think, is decisive; and fully discovers the fallacy of your opinion. Remission is a *gift* of free grace—and the change, or reformation, if you please, that precedes the enjoyment of it is the *work* of grace—for which reason the latter cannot be, in any possible sense, the cause or condition of the former. Nothing is a clearer fact than this—that man is altogether as *unwilling* as he is *unable* to work in himself that change which necessarily goes before the enjoyment of pardon—it is God the Spirit who exerts his sacred energy and works it himself. Yet, notwithstanding, to whatever extent this *inability* may reach, it is evidently criminal because it is voluntary. Here I would name a

III. *Evasion. A good life.* This also, you would have us suppose, sets aside the doctrine of the atonement; and, therefore, you often mention it as the ground of forgiveness from an offended God to offending creatures. But, sir, if you have not a good memory, allow me to help you. You have said, 'it is 'impossible to act *well* from a *bad* disposition or habit.' Is not this involving yourself in an insuperable difficulty, if not a manifest absurdity? If the fruit therefore cannot be *good* while the *tree* is *bad*, and we know it cannot, it is evident that the change, mentioned

mentioned above, must precede even a good life. And, if so, let a good life mean what it may, it cannot be the ground or cause of our forgiveness. But, you so strongly assert the important recommending nature of it, that I shall take the liberty to examine it. Indeed, you speak of it as though no kind of difficulty attended your ideas of it.

You tell us, 'that repentance and a good life are, *of themselves*, sufficient to recommend us to the divine favor—and, 'that nothing is requisite to make men, in all situations, the 'objects of his favor, but such moral conduct as he has made 'them capable of.' (ib. p. 155, 279.) What a strange notion you must entertain of the infinitely holy and righteous God! This matter, I think, may soon be settled, if we are not fond of disputing for its own sake. There is but *one* rule of moral conduct—that rule is the *law* of God—and this law expressly *commands*, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with 'all thy heart, and with *all* thy soul, and with *all* thy mind; 'and, thy neighbor *as thyself*.' Matt. xxii. 37, 39. Of this, man was 'capable' as he came from his Maker's hand; but not since the fall. If a man would SO conduct himself towards God, as to supersede the atonement of Christ, in reference to his enjoying eternal happiness; *every action* of his life must be completely sinless, *every action* must flow from a holy nature and be perfectly good, in its nature, object, motive, and end—that is, the law of God must be perfectly loved and altogether obeyed. But when we see the sameness of an *effect* for near six thousand years, without a single exception, we have all the evidence that the nature of the case requires or admits by which to judge of the *cause*. And when we see, in all that length of time, *not one* who has loved the Lord and his neighbor according to the rule laid down, but that the contrary has universally obtained; we therefore conclude, from the surest premises, that man, in his fallen state, cannot *deserve* the favor of God by any 'moral conduct of which he is capable.' Here, sir, you have either to deny the law of God, as the rule of moral conduct, or name the person who has kept it; and, if you fail herein, your assertion will appear fallacious and unsupported. One sin forfeits a right to life; and therefore that right can never more be recovered by the sinner, let his future conduct be what it may. Could any of Adam's posterity be found whose nature was pure, and who had perfectly kept the law, which, by the way, is a mere supposition; yet, even then, he could not have a right to heaven and glory on that ground, because that flows from the *covenant of grace* and not of works. Nor does it any more affect

affect the justice and goodness of God to *continue* the law to his rational creature after it is broken, with all its penal sanction; than at first to *give* it, when he knew man would not keep it. As the whole of the present question turns here, you have either to shew us that it was wrong to lay down such a rule, and institute such a law, *originally*; or give up your point—because, if the law was holy, just, and good, before man sinned, when he had a capacity for keeping it, his losing that capacity by sin cannot change the nature of the law, nor supersede his obligations to regard it as at first commanded. And, till this part of your work be done, sir, silence on the divine integrity would better become you: for, as the blessed God ‘did not tantalize his creatures,’ (ib. p. 282.) in giving them his holy law at first, so, his continuing that law, though *their* moral circumstances are changed, cannot, with any modesty or truth, be interpreted into such an inference. For, however our nature be *depraved*, yet, as we are voluntary agents, we are as justly obnoxious to punishment for sin committed as was the first transgressor. To accommodate the law to our fallen state—to suppose it allows of our defects and imperfections, as they are called—is to deny its *nature*, and annul its *authority*. For the law that connives at one violation cannot properly condemn. Where there has been no suffering deserved, there can have been no sin. And where there is no sin, it is either because there is no law, or because that law is perfectly observed. This subject, therefore, sir, lies open to your further reflection; for, if our persons can be justified and saved, by a *partial* obedience to the law of God, it will be very easy to prove that NO obedience at all would be of equal avail. True, sir; when a man ‘has a perfect knowledge of the *law*, he is prepared for embracing the *gospel*.’ (ib. p. 186.) This, however, the scribe had not of whom you speak. It is readily granted that all *positive* institutions should give way to *moral* obligations, if both cannot be properly regarded. But all such insinuations stand for nothing, sir, unless you could prove that the divine commands are, *in any instance*, incompatible with love to God and our neighbor. And, in order to prove this, you have to shew us *how* love to God, or our neighbor, can be expressed by disregarding the precepts of heaven. The apostle John says, ‘This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.’ 1 Epist. v. 3. And, our Lord says, ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that loveth me
‘not,

‘not; keepeth not my sayings.’ John, xv. 16, 24. While burnt offerings and sacrifices existed in the jewish church, by the will of God, it was an expression of love to him to attend them according to his direction; nor could that love have been properly testified had they been neglected.—No, sir; there is no man has such a perfect knowledge of the law, as to embrace the gospel, till he is made alive from the dead; and then he will cease from trusting his good life for acceptance with God, and joyfully embrace the gospel, as a discovery of *free* grace and salvation, which he feels he must experience or perish. The man who thus understands the law, sees clearly that he breaks it continually; and, that, could he keep it, his obedience would not entitle him to the felicity of heaven. To put good works *before* the favor of God, is to put the effect before the cause, and the action before the motive; for that man, and that man only, is found in the way of righteousness, whose soul is constrained to holy obedience from the love of God displayed in the cross of Christ. Apart from this motive there is not, strictly speaking, a good work performed in the world. What saith the scripture? ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love; *therefore* with loving kindness have I drawn thee.’ Jerem. xxxi. 3. Here you observe, sir, that sinners are made participants of the divine favor, *not* for their good life, but because they were the objects of everlasting love. And Paul says, ‘We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, when we were *enemies*.’ Rom. v. 10. This testimony is most expressly against your doctrine, and will stand eternally true. Your notion of a good life therefore must be most essentially false and dangerous.

Good works I should rejoice to see prevail over all the face of the earth; and would cheerfully hold out every gospel encouragement for their practice and pursuit—but, on this subject, I wish ever to remember the language of inspired Paul with peculiar affection and esteem. ‘For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which he hath before ordained that we should walk in them.’ Eph. ii. 10. ‘The great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ, gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.’ Tit. ii. 13, 14. These two passages shew me the importance, necessity, original, and end, of good works, in such a beautiful point of light, that I want no other inducement to love and practise them.

You

You say, 'It is *certainly* the doctrine of reason, of the old 'and new testament,' (ib. p. 279.) that a good life should make us favorites of God. You know, sir, that I dare not believe *reason* in opposition to my *bible*; for, it is by *this* I am to judge, believe, and determine; and not by *that*. And how you could be so positive on one side, where the word of God is so peremptory on the other; I must leave you to say. The man who holds up a good life as sufficient to recommend us to the divine favor, I consider as one of the boldest and most evident opposers of the gospel of God that can exist. —But, if you please, we will so far consult the bible as to understand what you call its '*general tenor*' on this subject; and let the reader judge between us.

What is not true of the less, no person surely will suppose is true of the greater. I refer now to the earthly and heavenly Canaan. If the first was not enjoyed for the good works of its possessors; much less the last. Moses, when addressing Israel on this head, says, 'The Lord did not set his 'love upon you, nor chuse you, because ye were more in number than any people (for ye were the fewest of all people); 'but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep 'the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the 'LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed 'you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh 'king of Egypt.' Deut. vii. 7, 8. 'Speak not thou in thine 'heart, after that the LORD thy God hath cast them out 'from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the LORD 'hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations the LORD doth drive them out from 'before thee. *Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of 'thy heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the 'wickedness of these nations the LORD thy God doth drive 'them out from before thee, and that he may perform the 'word which the LORD swore unto thy fathers, Abraham, 'Isaac, and Jacob. Understand, therefore, that the LORD 'thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy 'righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people.'* Ch. ix. 4—6. Such was the plain language of Moses the servant of the Lord—and, you observe, sir, that he repeats the humiliating assertion, in order to impress their minds with the *freedom* of the divine conduct in giving them the land of Canaan. Their redemption from Egypt, and their possession of the promised rest, arose, *entirely*, from the sovereign will and good pleasure of God. And, if we enlarge the scale, and

extend our views to a higher and brighter inheritance, good works will appear to have no more influence in obtaining the greater than the less. It is pity, and it is to be lamented, that we should not be willing to glorify God in heart and life, which is the reasonable service of every creature, without vainly supposing that he is *indebted* to us for it—as though he *needed* any thing of us. Acts, xvii. 25.

Let us hear the '*old testament*.' 'I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.' Job. ix. 2, 3. 'Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wife may be profitable unto himself? Is it any *pleasure* to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it any *gain* to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?' Ch. xxii. 2, 3. 'How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?' Ch. xxv. 4. 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall *no man living* be justified.' Ps. cxliii. 2. 'I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works, *for they shall not profit thee.*' Isai. lvii. 12. Nor was there any reason why the old testament saints should 'have been *reproved* whenever they presumed to mention their integrity before God, and took refuge in his mercy only, without interposing the sufferings or merits of the Messiah to mediate for them.' (ib. p. 158.) There could be no reason for such a reproof; because—1. Though their '*integrity*' was no ground of acceptance with God, yet it was a proof to themselves that they were neither deceivers nor deceived, as the expectants of future glory.—2. If '*their integrity*' had recommended them to the favor of God, or if they had considered it in that light, they need not, nor would they, have '*taken refuge* in his mercy only; for it is not an act of mercy, but justice, to shew favor to him who *deserves* it. But, their appealing to mercy, plainly proves that they had no dependence on their integrity. And, because—3. Mercy is only shewn to the sinner through '*the sufferings and merits of the Messiah*.' Of which hereafter. Now let us proceed to the evidence of

'The *new testament*.' There we have the following very expressive declarations. 'Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for
' by

' by the law is the knowledge of sin.' Rom. iii. 19, 20. ' So
 ' then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that run-
 ' neth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' Ch. ix. 16. ' For
 ' they being ignorant of God's *righteousness*, and going about
 ' to establish *their own righteousness*, have not submitted
 ' themselves unto the righteousness of God. *For Christ is*
 ' *the END of the law for righteousness* to every one that be-
 ' lieveth.' Ch. x. 3, 4. ' I do not frustrate the grace of God :
 ' for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead
 ' in vain.' Gal. ii. 21. Let these few suffice. But what
 was all this for? Why, to ' exclude boasting, that none
 ' might glory in his presence.' Rom. iii. 27. 1 Cor. i. 29.
 Nothing need be more fully asserted than this is by great
 Paul.—' For by grace ye are saved, through faith ; and that
 ' not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God : *not of works, lest*
 ' *any man should BOAST.*' Eph. ii. 8, 9. This evidence is
 so very explicit that no other parts can be construed into an
 opposite meaning, without destroying the *authority* of the
 book ; for, if it be yea and nay, it cannot be of God. Thus,
 sir, it is manifest, I think, if any thing can be so, that the
 faith of the gospel is absolutely contrary to justification and
 salvation by our good life, as you express it.—And, as for
 unbelievers, those who are not born again, the Spirit of truth
 most positively says, ' They who are in the flesh *cannot please*
 ' *God.*' Rom. viii. 8. And, that, ' without faith, it is *impossible*
 ' *to please him.*' Heb. xi. 6. You can have no well grounded
 hope, therefore, while God lives, of being recommended to his
 favor by your good life. No one can be a firmer friend to
 practical religion, as the *fruit* and *proof* of vital union with
 Christ, than our apostle ; but when that is held up as the re-
 commendatory cause or condition of our acceptance with God,
 in whole or part, no man can set his face against it with warmer
 zeal and stronger arguments. It is very true, sir ; we do not
 consider ' *faith as a work.*' However, not in your sense—
 because, it must be either a work of the law or of grace. It
 cannot be the *first* ; for the law knows no work but perfect
 obedience ; and such faith is not—it cannot be the *last* ; be-
 cause every work, or exercise, of grace, is an evidence of our
 interest in the divine favor already bestowed and enjoyed ; and
 therefore cannot be the cause or condition of such interest.
 That which is the effect, cannot be the cause of a thing ; unless
 it can be both cause and effect at the same time, and in the
 same sense. Hence the faith of God's elect is expressly said
 to be of ' *the operation of God,*' Col. ii. 12. and consequently

not of the creature. That faith in exercise which leads the subject of it to glorify God in all his purposes, promises, and providences, is such a work as would give us pleasure to see the whole world experimentally understand and manifest—but, ‘all men have, not faith.’ 2 Thess. iii. 2. Upon the whole—to close this letter—‘Our works are not the *impulsive* cause of our salvation, for that is the grace of the Father: nor the *meritorious* cause, for that is the grace and redemption of the Son: nor the *efficient* cause, for that is the grace of the Spirit: nor the *final* cause of our salvation, for that is the glory of the grace of God, displayed to the very uttermost to eternity. The *whole ultimate* design of God is to magnify the boundless riches of his ‘grace.’ These few thoughts, sir, on this branch of our main design, are submitted to your very serious attention. I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXVI.

REVEREND SIR,

NO doubt but you can recollect that when Moses, on a time, appeared among his brethren in Egypt and would have healed their divisions, ‘they thrust him from them, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?’ Acts, vii. 27. However, the God of Israel had appointed this same Moses to be both the one and the other. Similar to this appears your conduct towards the atonement of Christ—nevertheless, it is God’s appointed way of saving sinners. Under the influence of this temper you are betrayed into so much weakness as to put the effect for the cause, and the cause for the effect. See the instances already mentioned.—The same might be said with equal evidence and truth of

IV. Evasion. I mean *repentance*. To this also you have recourse to avoid, if possible, the satisfaction of Christ. *Prayer* is, no doubt, the incumbent duty of every man—and no less is *faith* in God’s revealed will. Hence we are exhorted to the one and the other. What is no duty to perform, is no crime to omit. And, so of *repentance*—when a creature has dishonored his Maker by sin, nothing can be more reasonable surely than to express a proper conviction of his

his folly and desert, by a suitable temper of shame and remorse. The whole becomes fit and proper from our relation to God and dependence upon him, as our lawgiver, benefactor, and judge. But, nothing is further from truth, than to suppose that we are encouraged to perform these acts as the ground of pardon, or the recommending cause to the divine favor and smiles! When we speak of these things, as connected with forgiving kindness, we are always taught to consider them as the *gifts* of unmerited compassion. Speak we of prayer? The Lord says by the prophet, 'I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication.' Zec. xii. 16. Do we want faith? The inspired Paul says, 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him.' Phil. i. 29. And these are Peter's words of repentance—'Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and a savior, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins.' Acts, v. 31. This is the true scripture account of the matter, sir; but not the least hint is given, any where that I can find, where the favor of God is founded upon our repentance. The bestowment of that blessing flows from a different, and a much nobler, cause.

You say indeed, that, '*Repentance and a good life are, of themselves, sufficient to recommend us to the divine favor.*' (ib. p. 155.) But if, in the ultimate sense of the words, we have nothing to do with *repentance*, confession, or pardon, as you say elsewhere, for my own part, I cannot see what we have to do with them now—how that can recommend us to the divine favor, with which we have nothing to do, I must wait to be informed. And for that information, I look up to you who assert it. Besides, what need have we of mercy if we are not miserable? And, how can we be miserable without sin? And, if we are sinners, how is it that we have nothing to do with *repentance*, confession, or pardon? Thus jarring, you see, sir, are the several parts of your scheme when fairly compared. Again, what honor redounds to the divine law from my *repentance*? It is true, repentance, if genuine, acknowledges the righteousness of the law, and the justice of the sentence, if the sinner be condemned—but, what reparation is this for the insult offered by the transgressor, to the honor and majesty of the legislator? *None*. Nor is the dignity of the law maintained, nor the right of government supported, if the rebel be pardoned, *because he is a penitent*. Both would be as fully asserted if
he

he was forgiven *without*, as *for*, the consideration of his repentance. But this I have mentioned before. (R. p. 45.) According to this mode of argument, not only the *desert*, but the *being* of sin, must be excluded. The *being* of sin includes not only a want of conformity unto, but also a transgression of, the law of God. The *desert* of sin is death. But, is repentance enduring that desert? Nothing like it. The law must therefore either take its course and the sinner sustain the penalty incurred, or the authority of the law he has violated must be given up, or some expedient must be adopted by which the law may be magnified, while the sinner is pardoned. This expedient cannot be found in repentance. No one supposes this, even in human laws, where there must of course be some defect; how much less in the law of heaven, which is necessarily perfect! This reasoning, one would suppose, must approve itself to every unprejudiced mind. It is built on divine testimony, and established by divine conduct—or Christ is dead in vain. Were magistrates able to penetrate the hearts of offenders, and did they find them truly penitent, (ib. p. 169.) and pardon them on that ground—yet still, the law as violated, and the legislator as insulted, would be in just the same state as though the culprit was pardoned without penitence—that is, the authority of both would be disregarded.

It is a pleasing truth that 'all the declarations of divine mercy are made without reserve or limitation to the truly penitent, through all the books of scripture;' (ib. p. 156.) and, it is a pleasing truth for this reason; because, none but the truly penitent are participants of the blessing. But the passage is not yet found where repentance is mentioned as the *cause* of that favor—it is always and only descriptive of the persons already interested in it. 'Divine mercy' bestows repentance; and therefore cannot be *obtained* by repentance. 'It is certainly required of us,' you say, 'that if our brother only *repent*, we should forgive him.' (ib. p. 159.) This is very true—but, what would you think of the man who should use such an equivocal argument as this, with you? Is there any thing in the case that bears a parallel? Not the least. You should never obscure the subject, sir.—Did I *create* my brother? Is he *dependent* on me for life and every enjoyment? Had I a right, or power, to *institute a law* for his moral conduct? Is it from me that he is to receive his *final* and *righteous sentence* for eternity? Can I make him *eternally miserable or happy*? You know, sir, that these queries must *all* be answered in the

negative

negative—then, with what propriety could you think of adopting such an instance on this question? It may amuse the reader, it may perplex him, but cannot possibly confirm your opinion, because it is so completely eccentric and foreign from the matter in hand. If a man who calls himself a *christian* wander away from the truth of revealed religion, he must be equally uncertain about the way of salvation with a *jew*—a jew who is known to reject the gospel of Christ. There is so great a similarity between your various doubtful language on this subject, and that of a jew, that I shall freely give it the reader for his future meditation. A late learned writer, who was competent to the business, makes this remark—‘The poor jews are at the utmost loss about *atonement*. Sometimes they tell us it is by *confession, repentance, and good works*; sometimes by *beneficence and hospitality*; sometimes they say their *captivity* is their atonement; and at other times, that *death* expiates all their sins.’ There is no possible way, that I can perceive, to account for the diversity of mankind relating to this great doctrine, but by concluding that they depart from the truth of God in his word: that is perfectly harmonious and uniform, as truth always is; but error is necessarily diverse and discordant. I shall now mention the

V. *Evaluation.* The *divine placability*. ‘God’s placability and free mercy,’ you say, ‘had never been impeached but for the doctrine of a soul.’ (Dis. v. iii. Introd. p. 18.) Here I must beg leave to observe—1. That, those who hold the doctrine of a soul do not impeach the free mercy of God; nor can it be proved against them. And—2. That, if there be no soul, distinct from matter, there can be no sin; and, if there be no sin, there can be no misery; and, if there be no misery, there can be no object of mercy—so that, if you allow the display of mercy, you must, of necessity, to be consistent, believe there is a soul distinct from matter. The charge of impeaching the divine mercy therefore rests on those who deny a soul, and not on those who receive it. And, from which charge, they must exculpate themselves as well as they can. Again, you say, ‘The necessarian believes nothing of our sinning in Adam—that we are liable to wrath on that account—that an infinite being makes atonement for us by suffering in our stead, and so makes the Deity *propitious* to us.’ (ib. v. ii. p. 155.) What the ‘necessarian’ may happen to believe we cannot help, his faith is no rule for us—we look to higher authority; for a rule and reason in believing. I think you have not stated this matter properly for us, in the last branch

branch of the quotation. If you do not know, deign to be told, sir, that we do not consider the atonement of Christ as *purchasing* or *procuring* the mercy of God to his people ; but as the fruit and proof of it. We believe, according to the scriptures, that the divine mercy is manifested *in* and *through* the Lord Jesus Christ, but not that the sufferings and obedience of Christ ' *made* the Deity propitious.' Christ is constantly represented as the *gift*, or *effect*, of eternal love and mercy, and therefore cannot be the *cause* of it ; unless you allow that cause and effect are both the same thing. If I judge rightly you quite mistake the ground of the argument. You seem to have only these two ideas—a *miserable creature*—and a *merciful maker*—so that the desert of sin, and the authority of the legislative right, appear to be foreign from your system. The offended God was under no obligation to shew mercy to sinners at all—any more, so to speak, than King George is obliged to pardon any who forfeit their lives to the laws of their country. Had the Supreme Being been *obliged* to do it, that obligation must have rose from necessity of nature. It could arise from no other cause. And, had that been the case, he must, by the same rule, have had mercy on *all*—and, at *all times*. Which supposition, as it is not only contrary to fact, but absurd, we conclude must be groundless. The display of mercy must be a sovereign, and not necessary, act—that is, it must be the fruit of his own will and pleasure. As no reason, out of himself, could produce the manifestation of mercy at all, so no reason, out of himself, could order the medium of its bestowment, or the objects on whom it should be exercised. This being the true state of the case, sir, the fact amounts to this—we can know no more of his mercy, either as to its being, manner of communication, or the objects of it ; than he has told us in his word. The *giver* of mercy is at full liberty to give it *as he pleases* ; in every respect—and, it becomes the miserable gratefully to receive it, *as he chuses to give it*. Receivers of a gift ought not to dictate to the giver. His rule is fixed—it is revealed—it is both honorable to him and happy to the objects of it. Without scruple, I perceive, you can freely *dictate* what evidence is, and what is not, sufficient to ascertain the atonement, as well as the soul. As though infinite wisdom was amenable at our bar, and subject to rules of ourprescribing ! Strange temper for a sinful creature to indulge ! See the close of Letter XVIII.

Yes, sir ; the incarnation, obedience, and death of Christ, and all spiritual blessings in him, you find to be the *effects*,
and

and not the *cause*, of divine mercy. Please to read the following texts; and you will see this asserted by unerring evidence. 'For God SO loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John, iii. 16. 'But God *commendeth* his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Rom. v. 8. 'In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God *sent* his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and *sent* his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.' 1 John, iv. 9, 10. Had this subject been properly regarded, according to divine testimony, it might, and I suppose it would, have prevented your very different conceptions of it. How two witnesses can be more opposite in their evidence on any subject, than you and the sacred writers are on this, I cannot apprehend—but, both sides cannot stand. I most sincerely wish you seriously and seasonably to consider which must fall.

'The natural placability of the Divine Being,' you say, 'and our ideas of the equity of his government, have been greatly debased by the gradual introduction of the modern doctrine of atonement.' (ib. p. 152.) Pray, sir, are *your* ideas of the divine government the exclusive measure of truth? Are *ours* altogether wrong? The plain fact is this—none of our ideas of the divine government can be just and proper, except they correspond with his own statement of it in his word—and, whose will bear the most rigid examination by this standard, is at least deserving one thought more than you ever bestowed upon it yet. On a question of this magnitude I would not have you decided in your mind, till you have surveyed the subject once again. That the divine government is equal, or full of equity, in the highest possible sense, no one can doubt and be innocent; but, equity in the divine mind, and in our mind, can never be supposed to be parallel, without perfect vanity. For this reason, it is neither wise nor modest, to judge of that by this. And yet, we are prone to do it. Hence arise almost all our false views of the divine word, and of the divine conduct. But, sir, let us detect the fallacy. The mercy of God is so far from being '*debased* by the atonement,' that it is the *only* ground on which it stands to be displayed, and the *sole* fountain whence the atonement itself proceeds; according to those passages of scripture which I have just now quoted, and others which will come before us hereafter. I am truly sorry, sir, to have occasion to point out your partiality in

citing the sacred record ; and yet I am obliged to do it. When you mention ‘ the declaration that God made of his character ‘ to Moses, presently after the Israelites had sinned in making ‘ the golden calf ;’ (ib. p. 156, 157.) you omit that part of his character which you should have quoted and explained, if you wish to establish your doctrine. Let us read the whole passage. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. ‘ And the LORD passed by ‘ before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, ‘ merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in ‘ goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving ‘ iniquity, and transgression, and sin’—Here you stop. But, is he not also *just* ? Yes, sir ; and, if the *whole* character had been given us by you, as it was to Moses by the Lord, we should have seen it—for, it is added, he ‘ *will by no means ‘ clear the guilty.*’ This part of the ‘ declaration’ should not have been concealed while the other was related ; because
‘ A God *all* mercy, is a God unjust.’

I am, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

REVEREND SIR,

IN order further to oppose, and, if possible, to explain away, the atonement, you introduce what may be called your

VI. Evasion. The *figurative* language of scripture. That there are figures of speech in the sacred volume, no one denies—but, are they of *no use* ? If so, they are superfluous. This, however, I presume, you will not allow. If they were not designed to convey any meaning ; the whole is a solemn farce and fiction. This, a friend to christianity cannot admit. For what purpose, then, could they be introduced ? When we read a *figurative* passage, are we to exclude every thing *real* from it ? On that ground we shall be strangers to all *reality*, and amused only with *figures* ! The apostle John says, ‘ *God ‘ is light.*’ 1 Epif. i. 5. Are we to receive this declaration as a mere figure of speech, destitute of any real meaning ? Is it not rather designed to teach us, by the best figure nature affords, the perfect *knowledge* of his understanding, and the absolute *purity* of his nature ? In this view a more pertinent and beautiful figure, perhaps, could not be used.

You

You tell us, 'The *figurative* representations of the life and death of Christ have unfortunately misled many christians, and have been the occasion of their entertaining opinions concerning the end of Christ's coming into the world, quite different from those which appear upon the face of the history; opinions which have been contradicted by the whole tenor of revelation, and which are extremely injurious to the character of the ever-blessed God.' (ib. p. 181.) If this plaintive assertion contain a fact, doubtless it is matter of lamentation. But still, it seems, these 'representations' have been only the 'occasion,' not the cause, of our being 'misled'—so that the supposed evil is not *naturally* or *necessarily* connected with them; but is only accidental or adventitious. For this reason, not the 'figurative representations,' but the *depravity of man*, ought to be charged with all the imaginary bad effects arising therefrom. If these 'different opinions' refer to any thing besides the *atonement* of Christ, my present undertaking knows nothing of them. That this doctrine is neither 'contradicted by revelation, nor injurious to the character of the ever-blessed God;' will be shewn in due place. Nor can I conceive, how the figurative representations of the life and death of Christ, can be the occasion of any discordant and noxious opinions—for, if the sufferings and death of Christ are merely figures of speech, no more is redemption—sin—the law of God—the divine government and character. The whole is a figure! If one link be a figure, all the chain is the same! The moral government of God cannot be separated from the cross of Christ in the salvation of a sinner. Perhaps, sir, you were not aware of this! The moral government of God a *figure*!—It is a glorious *reality*! Equally real is his holy law! When that law is violated, it is not done by a figure; it is an awful fact. Consequently the desert of such violation is not a figure; nor the pardon of the transgressor; nor redemption; nor the price of redemption—and yet the price of redemption is, *The blood of Christ*. You see, sir, in measure, what your idea of scripture figures draws after it! It not merely beclouds, but utterly destroys, annihilates altogether, the nature and desert of sin, the law and government of God, pardon and salvation to the fallen creature!! The wrath of God and eternal misery; the favor of God and eternal felicity, are mere figures—that is, *nothing*. What a doctrine to Adam's guilty sons! The Lord keep me from embracing it. The character of the ever-blessed God is so far from being '*injured*' by the *atonement*, that it

cannot be understood, in saving sinners, without it. Notwithstanding the seemingly opposite points where you and the papist take your stations, yet here you both meet in one centre ; for the same conclusion necessarily follows his *venial sins* and *works of supererogation*, as your account of the figures of scripture on the death of Christ. Who could have thought it ! What, Dr. Priestley a friend to popery ! Pardon this excursion, sir, and we proceed.

‘ The most remarkable of these figurative representations of ‘ the death of Christ,’ you say, ‘ is that in which he is compared ‘ to a sacrifice, and as a figure, it is just and beautiful.’ (ib. p. 182.) A just and beautiful figure of—what ? If the death of Christ be not a *real* sacrifice, it is a figure of—nothing, for nothing is represented by it. But, if it be real, then, surely, it is not a figure, a comparison ! Is this the way, sir, in which you wish us to read and interpret scripture ? But you proceed— ‘ In every sacrifice the victim is slain for the benefit of the ‘ person on whose account it is offered ; so Christ, dying ‘ to procure the greatest possible benefit to the human race, ‘ is said to have given his life a sacrifice for us ; and more- ‘ over as the end of the gospel is to promote the reformation ‘ of sinners, in order to procure the pardon of sin, the death ‘ of Christ is more expressly compared to a sin-offering.’ This is a vague and uncertain sound. Give me leave, sir, to put the matter in another and better light. To say the victim is slain for the *benefit* of the person, is not saying enough. *How* and *why* this benefit is supposed to accrue to the person for whom the victim is slain, you have not told us ; and yet it is right it should be known. Every person understands that, when a victim is sacrificed, it is offered *in the stead* of the person whose benefit is to be derived from it ; and not merely on his account. Every such sacrifice supposes sin committed, and life forfeited by that sin ; or otherwise the slaying the victim is void of all significance. Let these two things be understood, and the death of the animal is big with instruction : whereas, without them, it is not so much as a *figure* of any thing, because nothing *real* is meant by it. However, when it is considered in a just light, it is a *typical*, or figurative, representation, if you please, to the sinner, that, though he had deserved to die, yet, there is a *true* sacrifice, by the offering of which his sin is pardoned, and his life is spared. Nor is there any other sense in which the death of Christ could procure any spiritual good to the human race, much less the greatest benefit

benefit possible. It may be said, with great propriety, that the apostles and martyrs died *for our good*; but they are never, nor ought they to be, called *sacrifices for us*, or *for our sins*—as is expressly said of Christ. To say the death of Christ is expressly ‘*compared*’ to a sin-offering, and yet deny that it was an actual offering for sin, is saying less than nothing—because it is using words without a meaning; at least, without a meaning to me—for, if the death of Christ was not in *reality* a sin-offering, it is to no purpose to speak of it by such a *comparison*; and, if it was so, it is departing from the proper use of language to say, it may be ‘*compared*’ to it. It will be proved, therefore, in our progress, ‘that the Jewish sacrifices were *types* of this great, complete, and expiatory sacrifice of the death of Christ, by which they are abrogated and superseded.’ (ib. id.)

I am sorry to see a professed defender of christianity throw out such hints as cannot but promote *indifference* to the sacred page. I consider your insinuation concerning the epistle to the Hebrews in this light. (ib. p. 183.) There is every mark of ‘*certainty*,’ I think, that Paul was the author of it, that the nature of the case requires, or a lover of his bible would request; except the *name*. But, if I am not mistaken, the true reason of your conduct is this—you *deny* the atonement—this book *proves* it—and proves it by a *medium* of argument which you seem desirous to explain away—namely, the sacrifices of the former dispensation. Now, if this be the case, it is no wonder that you are embarrassed with its testimony, and would wish, on that account, to lessen its authority. But, truth needs no shelter; it has nothing to fear. Much less does the truth of God receive importance, or our love of it any evidence, by attempting to render his word suspicious. There have been gentlemen of the bar who, to serve a client in a bad cause, would not scruple to attack the *character* of the witness however *established*, in order, if possible, to lessen the weight of his evidence. But it can be no information to you to say, that, chicanery is always a dishonor to its employer, and is only a bruised reed set up to buttress a falling mountain. If it be the cause of truth that we plead, sir, let us studiously avoid the arts of those who have wished to blind the eyes of the judge, and pervert the minds of the jury.

Not only is the death of Christ called a sacrifice, but he is himself ‘called a priest, and a high priest. This very circumstance,’ you say, ‘might have given us to understand, that

'that both the representations are merely figurative.' (ib. p. 184.) Did not the high priest of old offer up the sacrifice? There was nothing 'very harsh' in it, nor could there have been any 'confusion in our ideas' had we stood by to see him perform that service—nor can I discern the least harshness or confusion in asserting that Christ, as the high priest of his people, *offered himself* the sacrifice for their sins. If there be any harshness or confusion, it must be in the mind and language of him who says Christ did so, if he did not, or if it be not a fact: because that would be asserting a falsehood, and without a reason, or temptation. Consequently the man who could do so, would be highly culpable, and deserving the severest censure, for his officious conduct.—But, if it be a fact, that is, if Christ did offer himself a sacrifice for the sins of his people, of which the scripture evidence is clear, then surely, it must be harsh and confusing to call his death, and his office as a priest, a 'mere figurative representation'—that is inverting the order of things with a witness; making fact and figure convertible terms, and so destroying their obvious import. Where this confusion and harshness can be traced, let it be done—and let the authors own their weakness. Though figurative language may be abused, that is no reason why it should be discarded, nor its real intention and design be denied; but, rather, it should make every man the more serious and open to conviction 'in ascertaining the *real meaning* of the person 'who makes use of it:' (ib. p. 213.) because it is never used, by any author one would suppose, and more especially on this subject, without a real and significant design. Moreover, you tell us, 'that those particular texts on which we are disposed to lay so much stress, must either be interpreted *literally*, according to the plain and obvious sense of the words, which will enforce the belief of proper vicarious punishments, or they must be interpreted *figuratively*; and then they will not oblige us to believe the doctrine of atonement in any sense, or that Christ died a sacrifice in any other manner, than as any person might be said to be a sacrifice to the cause in which he dies.' (ib. p. 278.) This sentence shews us fully that you introduced your remarks on the figurative language of scripture with a design to explain away the atonement; or else you would never have preferred a '*figurative sense*' of the sacred text, to that which is '*plain and obvious*.'—But, sir, while you did this you should have given us *some meaning* to such figures

figures of speech, and not have left the numberless places where they occur completely destitute of sense.—To put us off with saying, the death of Christ is a just and beautiful figure—and that he was sacrificed to the cause in which he died—is doing nothing, or worse; because, there is no sacrifice of which the death of Christ *can possibly* be a figure; and, because, a man may be sacrificed to a *bad* cause as well as a *good* one. If yours be called ‘*interpreting*’ scripture, I must beg leave to say, I think it is *interpreting away* its good sense; and leaves a poor, convinced, lost sinner without help and without hope. For, a figurative salvation will not suit me, however it may other folks. But, if we are only saved in a *figure*, we shall be lost for ever in *reality*. The texts which speak of the ancient Jewish sacrifices were figurative, I grant—but they were figures, or ‘representations,’ of something *real* and *true*, or of nothing. And there is no reality to which they could possibly have respect but the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this true and real light, therefore, I interpret all those passages which speak of Christ, as a sacrifice and a priest; because he was both the one and the other.

The death of Christ was properly a sacrifice, or it was not. If it was not, there is no figure of speech can give us an idea of its design; but, if it was, none could be so suitable to teach preceding ages as those of the Jewish ritual—every part of which had, more or less, a reference to him. And, indeed, without this, the whole of that service is destitute of meaning. Yes, sir; even the *vail* in the temple, ‘bold a figure’ as you esteem it, (ib. p. 187.) most expressly taught the necessity and importance of the death of Christ for our entrance into the holiest of all. This doctrine was held up to the Jews at the crucifixion of Christ, when the vail was rent from the top to the bottom. Mark, xv. 38. And therefore Paul was quite right in explaining that part of the subject in such a view. Heb. ix. 8. Apart from this idea, both the vail itself and the rending it, were totally insignificant to the Jews and to us: whereas, with this idea included and principally designed, the whole is beautifully expressive of the *true* sacrifice being offered, the *true* priest entering within the vail, and that therefore the *figurative* must give way. ‘Circumcision’ (idem.) was a figure of regeneration and holiness. This also had its fulfilment in Christ. And, for as much as Christ is their life and sanctification, believers are truly said to be circumcised in him.

him. This newness to life and death to sin they profess not only to believe as a truth, but to experience as a fact, when they are '*buried with him in baptism*;' which, by the way, could not be taught by infant baptism. The introduction of which entirely destroys the design of that ordinance, *as a figure*. If you had not referred to Rom. vi. 4. among your figures, I should not have named it. And, likewise all the chosen of God were '*crucified with Christ*'—because he suffered in their nature and in their name; and bore their sins in his own body on the tree. This being the truth of the case, these several figurative terms, '*harsh*' as you account them, are designed to teach us the union that subsists between Christ and his church, and the blessings derived to them in consequence of it. You say that '*Christ died to promote the reformation of the world, and therefore we should not be surprized to find him called a sacrifice for the sins of men.*' (idem.) But, had the reformation of the world been the *exclusive end* of our Lord's appearing and dying, that would not justify our calling his death a sacrifice; no, not even in the greatest latitude of speech: unless you allow that reformation must necessarily follow upon his death, or, unless you admit that he might die in vain. The *last* you cannot grant, because you say, and say truly, that '*God cannot fail in applying the means to the end he designed;*' (Dis. v. ii. p. 120.) and, the *first* fails in evidence every day. Seeing the reformation of the world was therefore not the end designed by infinite wisdom, we must look out for some other reason for calling his death a sacrifice. That reason will appear in due place. Besides, the ministry of Paul was more extensive and more successful than that of his master; but Paul was never called a sacrifice for the sins of men—which, yet, he might have been, and with more propriety than Christ, if the reformation of the world had been the object in view. And, especially, when we add, that he fell a sacrifice to the cause in which he died. The figures of scripture therefore must remain just as they are; that is, they must be designed to give us some knowledge of that which is real, or they are totally useless; and the bible becomes an insignificant book. To the above you are pleased to subjoin the following words. '*Still less shall we wonder, if we consider how familiar all the rites of the Jewish religion were to the minds of the apostles, so that whatever they were writing about, if it bore any resemblance to that ritual, it was sure to obtrude itself.*' (Corrup. v. i. p. 187.) This insinuation, fir, is as incompatible with a *defence*, as it is perfectly unworthy
a defender

a *Defender* of christianity. What the author may be *intentionally*, who can use such language, is not for me to say; but, it is very evident that he is not, *in fact*, a friend to revealed religion. For, according to this assertion, all the authority and meaning of the apostles sacrificial expressions must be founded merely on their *prior habits* of worship; and not at all on the *truth* or *design* of the worship itself. Similar to this may be said of Christ, the prophets, of Moses, and the patriarchs—and then, of course, the bible can be of no consequence to us; for, though we find an uniformity of language on the subject for the space of four thousand years, yet, on your principle, the whole is but a *figure*, not designed to teach in any thing *real*, and, therefore, stands for—NOTHING. I hope you will reflect on this thought another time, sir, and seriously contemplate its certain issue. I shall fill the remainder of this letter with a few remarks on *your* account of

Christ's coming into the world. That he had a *design* in his appearing on earth, we both allow; but, the question is, 'What was it?' 'If our Lord,' you say, 'had considered the jews as having lost sight of the fundamental principle of their religion, he would certainly have pointed it out to them, and have drawn their attention to it.' (ib. p. 159.) If language can have any '*certain*' meaning, they had so far lost sight of the fundamental principle of their religion, as to have laid it quite aside, and obtruded their own inventions in its room. Nothing less than this can be supposed in those pointed reproofs the Redeemer gave them from time to time. It is true, they were zealously, and even scrupulously, careful to keep the *books* and *words* of the old testament; but the *sense* they had most evidently and sadly perverted. Let us hear the Savior. 'Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups; and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.' Mark, vii. 7—9. And again, 'Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' Matt. xxiii. 13. This *Wo* is repeated eight times in this chapter with every possible mark of the keenest censure. Speaking of the temple also he says, 'It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.' Matt.

Matt. xxi. 13. And, on the ground of acceptance with God, he tells the people, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. v. 20. In a word, their spite and opposition to his doctrine, and continued attempts to seize and abuse his person, apart from every thing else, prove, beyond all doubt, that they had lost sight of the fundamental principle of their religion. Please to reflect, sir, on the awful and solemn language our Lord uses when addressing them in the temple once—'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And, because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.' John, viii. 44, 45. Would such an assertion have been *generous*, or even *just* and *true*, had they kept in view, and had they been governed by, the fundamental principle of their religion? The answer is very easy. Every reader must readily say, 'No; it would not.' But, you directly add, that, 'If the proper end of his coming into the world had been to make satisfaction to the justice of God by his death (which certainly they who did not expect a suffering Messiah could have no idea of), he would have taken some opportunity of explaining it to them. But nothing of this kind occurs in the whole course of his preaching; and though he frequently speaks of his death, it is never as having had such an end.' Whether the Jews did, or did not, expect a '*suffering Messiah*,' such ancient prophecy told them he would be; and such, according to the scriptures, he was. But, notwithstanding the sacrifice and atonement of Christ was the fundamental principle of the Jewish religion; yet, because they expected 'a *triumphant*, and not a *suffering* Messiah,' (ib. p. 158.) therefore their expectations are to be the *standard* of truth, and *decisive* evidence on the question!! Do you not see the fallacy of this reasoning, sir? I think every one must. Would you admit a similar argument on another occasion? Perhaps, no person would sooner reject it. You know the consequence too well to allow it. According to this argument our faith must rest on what thousands of them afterwards confessed to be their folly and their shame.

Though the term *Satisfaction* should not be found, yet if the doctrine be revealed which we mean by it, all is well. For the present let us suppose it. How you will reconcile
your

your *positive* assertions with the following texts, I must leave you to say: I wish you to read them with attention. 'The Son of man came *not* to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to *give his life* a RANSOM for many.' Matt. xx. 28. 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is *shed for many for the remission of sins.*' Ch. xxvi. 28. 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd *giveth his life for the sheep.*' John, x. 11, 15. Does it not become every man to be careful how he contradicts such plain express declaration of holy writ? Making satisfaction to the justice of God, is to suffer and die in the stead of the sinner, that he may live—but, you say, '*nothing of this kind occurs in the whole course of our Lord's preaching*'—whereas, without this idea, the above passages are some out of many, which can admit of no rational meaning. Do tell us, sir, what you think is their design. 'Nor do we find the least hint of such an end in Christ's appearing,' you say, 'in his solemn intercessory prayer before his death.' (ib. p. 161.) On the contrary, I think nothing need be much more plainly expressed than this doctrine is in John, xvii. 19. Speaking of his body the church, he says, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' Yes, sir; I could wish you to listen a moment to the opinion of an enemy—I mean Caiaphas; who says to the council, 'Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. In this he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad.' John, xi. 49. xviii. 14. 'After our Lord is risen from the dead,' you say, 'he keeps the same profound silence on the subject of the supposed true and only great cause of his death.' (idem.) This is his address to his disciples. 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' Luke, xxiv. 46, 47. Can all these passages be fairly interpreted merely to signify his appearing for the reformation of the world, and dying in the cause of virtue! How forced such an interpretation! How insipid such doctrine! It is totally unworthy a defender of christianity, and infinitely unworthy of God! By the *first* it ought not, and

by the *13^d* it will not, be approved. Of this you will soon be sensible. 'And,' you add, 'as little do we find of it in the history of the book of Acts, after the minds of the apostles were fully illuminated with the knowledge of the gospel.' That they preached the doctrine, and exhorted men to the exercise, of repentance, is true—but, did they stop there? By no means. Let us hear Peter to the rulers of the church—'This is the stone which was set at nought of *you* BUILDERS, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' Acts, iv. 11, 12. How was it, sir, that you could overlook this passage? That Peter does not use the word '*Satisfaction, Expiation, or Atonement,*' (ib. p. 162.) is granted; but, as he evidently taught the doctrine implied in those words, that is quite sufficient. Though the great Redeemer was delivered by the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God, yet he was put to death by wicked hands. The decree of heaven did not supersede their impious cruelty: for, on their part, he was crucified without a reason. And, though they crucified the Lord of glory through ignorance, yet, that by no means excused their sin; for, if so, Peter had not preached to them the necessity of repentance. Nor did he tell them that repentance would prove the *ground* of their pardon; but freely and fully informed them that both were the *gifts* of Christ, and that there was salvation in no other name under heaven.

True, sir; *Stephen* did not expressly call the death of Christ 'a propitiation for sin;' (ib. p. 163.) and one reason for it might be this—his accusers and judges prevented his finishing his defence.—Why did they not hear him out? Why could they 'not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake?' What was his crime, that they stoned him? Did this holy man preach an opposite doctrine to Peter? If so, he had not suffered. If we attend a moment to his accusers we may learn something of his doctrine.—It is to be observed that both *Stephen* and Christ suffered, *openly*, as blasphemers; though all the world have agreed to acquit them from the charge, and to censure the sentence under which they died. The great Messiah told the high priest that he was, *The Son of God*. And *Stephen* preached, according to his inditement, that JESUS of Nazareth would destroy Jerusalem and change the customs, or rites, delivered by Moses. Thousands of the Jews were soon convinced that
their

their sentence against the Savior was cruel and unjust; and that the charge of blasphemy was rash and impious: for, he is *truly the Son of God*. His owning the truth therefore could not be blasphemy. No more was the language of Stephen. Jerusalem had deserved to be destroyed, and the ritual of Moses was accomplished in Christ; and therefore both events were to be as Stephen had said: nor can any *other reason* be given, in my opinion, why the one was destroyed and the other done away. But, such were the zeal and ignorance of the jews, even of their *rulers*, that whoever dare tell them the truth on this subject was sure to suffer from their rage. This, it seems, was the ground of Stephen's martyrdom. However, seventeen hundred years have proved the truth of his doctrine, and the crime of their conduct. How unmeaning the whole of this, if Christ appeared and suffered *only* as the patron and example of virtue! Why should Jerusalem be destroyed, and the law of Moses abrogated, if this were all! Perhaps, no man can tell us!—But, a just idea of the character and cross of Christ explains all, confirms all, at once.

When *Philip* preached to the eunuch you say, 'there is no mention of the doctrine of satisfaction for sin by the death of Christ.' (ib. id.) By the way, is there not as much said for, as against it? Is Philip's *sermon* in your hand? Can you tell *all* that was said? Why so fond of concluding from silence, sir? However, if I may say so, if you have not the sermon, you have the *text*; and this should have been considered before you had drawn your conclusion. The subject the eunuch was reading was this—'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.' And, you are told that Philip 'began at the same scripture and preached to him JESUS.' Acts, viii. 32—35. What this includes you have not so much as *hinted*—but, should you have passed it? By no means. Is it of no importance? Is it without meaning, on the present question? So far from it that it is a noble testimony to the truth of our doctrine.

'And *Peter* preaching to Cornelius is still silent,' you say, 'about this fundamental article of the christian faith. On the contrary,' you assert that 'what he says upon the occasion, may, without any forced construction, be turned against this favorite opinion.' (idem.) If so, why had you not done it? It would have been *generous* to us, and *just* to the truth, to have
shewn

shewn us our error.—Yes, sir; we know that ‘God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.’ But, did Peter tell Cornelius and his friends that this was the *ground* or *cause* of their acceptance? Nothing like it. And, yet, *this* was the point you had to prove. It is a testimony, or evidence, of our being already accepted with God, but not the cause: for, we are ‘accepted in the beloved.’ Eph. i. 6. Did you not say, sir, that the apostle was *silent* about this fundamental article? How then are we to understand him, when he says that, ‘peace is preached by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all),’ and, that, ‘through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins?’ Acts, x. 36, 43. This is a part of Peter’s sermon on that occasion which you should not have omitted. Is it insignificant? Can it be turned against this favorite opinion without any forced construction? If it can, do be so kind, sir, as to do it for us. But, if it cannot, we all know the consequence: namely, you assert what you cannot prove.

‘The apostle Paul before the jews at Antioch, Acts, xiii. 28. at Thessalonica, ch. xvii. before Agrippa, ch. xxvi. and at Rome, ch. xxviii. on all these occasions, treats, and sometimes pretty largely, concerning the death of Christ; but never,’ you say, ‘with any other view than as an event that was foretold by the prophets.’ (ib. p. 164.) How, sir! an event of so much importance as to be the object of *prophecy*, and the subject of an apostle’s *ministry*, and yet simply to be treated as an event! Such an event must have *some* significance! must be directed to *some* end! or it must be an uncommon event indeed! But you chuse to assert that it was ‘never’ mentioned by Paul, at these places, but only as an object of ‘*prophecy*!’ Strange assertion! totally unmeaning and unsupported! Had I not found you defective before, I should have been the more surprized at this! However, sir, you will permit me to observe, that, your authority is not yet so established as to command *implicit* regard! Let us see what he says upon these ‘occasions,’ and then we shall know whether you have done the subject justice.—‘At Antioch, Acts, xiii. 28.’ When you referred us to the 28th verse which speaks of the death of Christ, why did not you also mention the 38th and 39th verses, where you see the *design* of his dying? There the apostle says, ‘Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from

' from all things, from which you could not be justified by the
 ' law of Moses.' Pity, sir, I think, but you had gone as far as
 your guide would have led you!—' At *Thessalonica*, ch. xvii.*
 If you had only read the 2d and 3d verses you might have seen
 something deserving your notice. There Paul reasoned with
 them out of the scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ
 must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and
 that Jesus whom he preached unto them is Christ. Had you
 paid that attention to the subject which might have been
reasonably expected, you could have turned to Paul's letters
 to that church and given us your thoughts on the following
 passages. ' They were turned from idols to serve the living
 ' and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom
 ' he raised from the dead, even JESUS *who delivered them*
 ' *from the wrath to come.*' 1 Theff. i. 9, 10. ' For God hath
 ' not appointed us to wrath; but to obtain salvation by our
 ' Lord Jesus Christ, *who died for us*, that whether we wake or
 ' sleep, we should live together with him.' Ch. v. 9, 10.
 ' We are bound to give thanks always to God for you,
 ' brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the
 ' beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification
 ' of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called
 ' you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our
 ' Lord Jesus Christ.' 2 Theff. ii. 13, 14. Now, had you
 done this, it would have been no more than the matter
 required to set it in a just and proper light; because it is
 necessary to conclude that his preaching and writing were
 all of a piece.—' Before *Agrippa*, ch. xxvi.' On this
 ' occasion' also Paul did not omit the glory of the gospel,
 the *design* of Christ's appearing and dying. Please to read
 verses 17th, 18th, 22d, and 23d.—' And, at *Rome*, ch. xxviii.*
 Here the 23d, 28th, and 31st verses should have been con-
 sulted and explained by you, in order to establish your
 assertion—but you are silent on them all! And, elsewhere
 Paul says, ' This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all
 ' acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save
 ' sinners; of whom I am chief.' 1 Tim. i. 15. How these
 several places can be supposed to teach us that the death of
 Christ was mentioned *only* as an event of prophecy—and
 how they could be all omitted by a candid enquirer after
 truth, in stating the *design* of Christ in coming into the
 world, I really cannot conjecture! I must look up, sir, for
 your friendly information. As the bible lies open before
 us, no author is entitled to implicit confidence. When the
 reader

reader has duly considered the texts already adduced, and such as will be mentioned in the subsequent letters; he must be superficial in the extreme, or strangely prejudiced, in my poor opinion, to say the least, to insinuate that the atonement is 'built on mere *hints* and *inferences*'—much more to suppose that either Christ or the apostles 'were *absolutely silent*' concerning it—and, most of all, to say that 'they make use of language that *really* sets it aside.' (ib. p. 165.) For, were this the case, what you assert of the old testament, would be true of the whole bible—namely, that 'it is throughout, a most unaccountable book, and the religion it exhibits is defective in the *most essential* article.' (ib. p. 158.) I am, &c.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

REVEREND SIR,

I CANNOT enter immediately on the *proof* of the atonement, till I have employed a few minutes on some more of your exceptions—such as I have not yet named. You seem to find an ambiguity in the application of the terms *Atonement* and *Sacrifice*; and therefore conclude, at once, that they were not designed to teach us the death of Christ in the light in which we receive it. All the world knows that truth, like the sun, needs no evidence to attest its being and beauty but its own beams. Nay, it is nobly superior to all the arts of address, and all the skill of the critic. Let it *shine*—and that is sufficient.

The word *Atonement* is used, we allow, where no victim was sacrificed—and consequently, in that case, one life was not given for another. But, to have been quite free and fair with your reader, it should have been shewn us that it *never* occurs when such a business is in view. This you have not done; and therefore the matter lies open before us. Does not a secondary, or less proper, use of a word always imply a primary signification? This is sometimes forgotten, or omitted; and, it may be, not without a reason. 'Atonement,' you say, 'under the jewish dispensation signifies the making *clean* or *holy*—of *things* that they might be fit to be used in the service of God, and of *persons* that they might be fit to come into

'into his presence.' (ib. p. 193.) Nothing, surely, can represent more strongly, by a figure, the defiling nature of sin and the need of atonement for it—for, if persons and things were ceremonially unfit for 'public worship' without a ceremonial atonement, they must be much more so in reality without a real atonement: or sin is a nullity, and the former dispensation without meaning. Every one can see the propriety of an argument when it is formed like the present—unless you will assert the blood of bulls and of goats was of more value than the blood of Christ! 'Guilt in a moral sense,' you say, 'is never said to be atoned by any sacrifice, but the contrary is strongly expressed by David and others.' (ib. p. 194.) I should have been glad, sir, if but ONE of these strong expressions by David and others had been given us, that some judgment might have been formed of them—and, I speak thus, because I am really a stranger to such passages. You are therefore called upon to shew them to us. If atonement be made, at all, it is made for the sin done, and, that being pardoned by virtue of the atonement, the punishment is not endured. When David and others petitioned the Lord not to enter into judgment with them, they discovered a consciousness of being sinners; and consequently knew, if they were tried accordingly, they must suffer deserved punishment. 'Had Christ died as a proper expiatory sacrifice,' you say, 'he should have died on the *day of expiation*, and at the *time* when the high priest was entering into the holy of holies.' (idem.) Had the death of Christ happened a *few hours* different from what it did, then, it seems, you might possibly have believed that it was a proper expiatory sacrifice! What an argument! The author who flees to such a refuge but too plainly shews his reader how strongly the light of truth shines upon him! Can any thing else account for such a remark? When you say 'it was not the sacrifice, but the priest that made atonement;' (ib. p. 190.) you are to be reminded, sir, that, in the present view of the question, the priest could not have done it without a sacrifice; and therefore there is the greater propriety in our believing that Christ, our high priest, has made atonement for the sins of his people by the sacrifice of himself; according to the scriptures. Sin introduces an alienation between the sinner and a holy God—in consequence of which the sinner's mind is at enmity against God, and a pure Jehovah cannot hold fellowship with a sinner, *as such*. If reconciliation therefore take place, the atonement on which it is founded, must be the fruit of the wisdom and love of God;

and consequently be brought about in a way that is both acceptable to him and worthy of him. But, more of this hereafter.

Sacrifice also is a term of various use and application. But is it never used, in the word of truth, to signify the real and actual death of one in the stead of another? This was the part which you had to prove; but have left it undone. No doubt but you can give us a reason for that omission. And, I think the reader is entitled to it. Substitution is an essential idea in a sacrifice; when it is connected with the pardon of sin. I consider the bible quite sufficient to ascertain its own meaning in point of criticism, as well as of doctrine. If not, it is inferior and dependent; and consequently that book, or author, by whose authority the matter is settled, must be more important than the word of God. This notion, however, will not be admitted by a *real* friend to revelation. Not that I have the least objection to the use of other books for understanding the different acceptation of words and phrases; but should be glad if an index of that nature was accurately compiled and published: yet still, I freely give the whole away when my *divine* rule of faith and practice is put in competition.

‘When we consider the circumstances in which sacrifices were used,’ you tell us, ‘they appear easily to fall under the general notion of gifts, or the more particular one of entertainments, furnished at the expence of the person who was dependent and obliged.’ (ib. p. 188.) If we suppose this to be true in a *remote sense*, when an inferior invited a superior to his table among creatures; yet, on the present question, it is superficial and unmeaning. Nothing can be a *gift*, properly speaking, from the creature to God; because, a gift precludes the idea of a prior right in the receiver; and, because, all we have and are must flow from, and therefore ought to be devoted to the glory of, the great Supreme. Though they may be ‘considered as acknowledgments for favors received from, or of homage to, God or man,’ under certain circumstances; yet, in this question, something else should undoubtedly have been mentioned to the reader. It is true, the *peace-offerings* among the jews, may be viewed in some such light as this; but not the *burnt-offerings*. Did you not *know* this difference, sir? Why then was it omitted? Our concern is with these, and not with those. Of this the reader should have been informed; and not his attention be wholly taken up with a partial view of the subject. I call it a *partial*
view

view of the subject ; because peace-offerings were never considered as sin-offerings, for they suppose sin forgiven ; and because it is from the latter and not the former that the doctrine of the atonement is to be understood. For this reason, sir, you need instruction, or to be reminded of what you know, or to be reproved. But, which of them, I must leave you to inform us. ' In the jewish ritual the ceremonies attending a ' sacrifice for sin,' you say, ' did not differ in any thing material from those that were used in other sacrifice.' (ib. p. 190.) The burnt-offering was commanded and specified, the peace-offering was not. This was *partly eaten* ; that was *wholly burnt*. Did you never observe this *difference*, sir ? Besides, peace-offerings were *never* designed, nor used, as sacrifices for sin ; whereas the burnt-offerings, as a type, had this design and use *only*—and, for this reason, they were considered as ' vicarious and bore the sin' of the transgressor, in whose stead they were offered. This makes them to ' differ' essentially in *design*, however some ' ceremonies' attending them might agree—and, therefore, the difference is so ' *material*' on the whole, that, I think, you ought to make the best apology you can to your reader for passing it over in such a manner.

' Had the death of Christ been simply and properly a ' sacrifice,' you say, ' we should not expect to find it denominated in any manner that was inconsistent with this representation, which, however, is very common in the scriptures.' (ib. p. 192.) What your *expectation* might be, is not for me to determine or characterize just now ; but, if this inconsistency be ' *very common*' in the scriptures, it is a little strange that only here and there one should observe it ! I can by no means account for the oversight ! It is pity, sir, but you had pointed out a place or two for our notice ; and not kept all the knowledge of such a circumstance to yourself—we would have owned the obligation ; because we are fond of knowledge as well as our neighbors. As the sacrificial language of scripture does not furnish this very common inconsistency, do be so obliging, sir, as to shew us where it may be found. And this, indeed, if you will allow me to say it, you *ought* to do, both for your own sake, and that of truth.

Moreover, you seem to doubt whether sacrifices had their first institution from God.—You say, (ib. p. 188.) ' Whether ' sacrifices were appointed by God, or a method which men ' themselves thought of (which I think not improbable) of

‘expressing their gratitude to God,’ &c. This matter may be settled, I think, by a little reflection. But, is it to rest on *your* thinking it not improbable? Perhaps not. If sacrifices were of human invention, indulge us with the name of the *inventor*—his *design*—and the *reason* why they do not still obtain where the gospel is received.—This favor is the more reasonably requested, because it *materially* affects our present subject; and would greatly tend to terminate our enquiry. It is so important and necessary a part of your work that it ought not to be omitted; because, if sacrifices are not of *men*, they must be of *God*: and should be considered in that light. As precarious evidence will not satisfy you as a *philosopher*, so, a negative probability ought not to be received by you, in this case, as a *divine*. Should this kind of evidence prevail with you, we shall be tempted to suspect your attachment to revealed religion, notwithstanding your professed predilection in favor of it. Suppose, merely for the sake of enquiry, that the first use and design of animal sacrifices *were not* an institution of heaven; can you give a satisfactory account of their original introduction, and their disuse with us? Do so, then: and, doubtless, the public will so far feel the obligation as freely to acknowledge the favor. This is a piece of service which is absolutely due to the reader, from an author who professedly receives the bible as the word of God, and yet denies the atonement of Christ. I am, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

REVEREND SIR,

BY considering the things abovementioned our way is cleared of the obstructions which you supposed would prevent a reception of the truth of the gospel. And now it is more manifest than it was before, if more manifest it could be, that, if we are not saved by the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ, we must all perish for ever: for all you have hitherto said to the contrary appears to be of no weight. The doctrine of atonement you chuse to call ‘quite a modern thing’—as though you had fully proved it to have no evidence in the bible. This, however, the unbiassed reader will

will see is very far indeed from being done; though nothing but *full proof* will justify your language. Some gentlemen, you know, sir, can suppose and wish things to be so and so—and then presently conclude they are so. You can give this temper and conduct a name, and excuse me.—The scripture atonement is a doctrine that suits fallen man: he needs it; he cannot be happy without it. Philosophy may propose a mode of happiness to *innocent* creatures; but it is the bible only that reveals a happiness for *sinners*. Revealed religion alone secures the divine character in the salvation of rebellious men. If both these are not united, it is easy to conclude which must give way: for the eternal God will not give his glory to another. The atonement, sir, is the glory of christianity, and of the church; and, indeed, without it there never would have been a church to glorify God among fallen men, any more than among fallen angels. There are two things which one would imagine no man can be disposed to deny; which, if granted, you cannot possibly avoid beholding this beauty and basis of revealed religion. Allow that man is a *sinner*, and that God is determined to *save* sinners; and the doctrine of the atonement comes before you with all the force of invincible evidence. You have no alternative. In the course of what is further to be said on the subject, there will be an occasion to mark the manner of your obscuring the sense of scripture while you propose to explain it. I shall range my topics of *proof* under four particulars, simply for the sake of order and perspicuity, viz. The sacrificial language of scripture—the characters of Christ connected with the atonement—the benefits we receive by him in consequence of it—and, the divine perfections. In each of which I shall study to be as brief as I well can. Let me name,

I. The use of *sacrificial* language. Here I must beg leave to premise two things—1. That all animal sacrifices, from the foundation of the world, which were offered to the Lord according to his will, were typical representations of the sacrifice of Christ; which was to be offered in due time. For this reason they all appear to be *figures*, and not the *true ground* of the sinner's pardon. And—2. That all such sacrifices, when or by whomsoever offered, suppose sin committed, and that the demerit of sin is death. Apart from this, the slaying of an animal, under the notion of religion, is the most insignificant and unaccountable of all actions. The creature cannot be supposed to have offended the offerer, nor
the

the object to whom it is offered; nor to be of any avail, in itself, for any moral purpose.—The introduction of such sacrifices, however, is no mean proof that the great Ruler and Governor of the world designed hereby to teach fallen man the necessity and value of a *real* sacrifice for sin to be offered in the fulness of time; and that without an eye to, and interest in him, there could be no fellowship with heaven. In this view, Christ being called, 'The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' Rev. xiii. 8. receives a beauty and emphasis, which contrary interpretations must leave completely obscure and unintelligible.

If you look into the law of Moses you will find every thing respecting the *sin* or *burnt offering* ordered by the Lord of worship with the greatest precision—in which offerings they were taught to consider themselves as sinners against the Lord, and that without such sacrifices they could not come into his presence; but that, on bringing their sacrifices, laying their sin upon it, and having it slain and offered up in their name and stead, the Lord was accessible to them. Yet still, as these were but types or figures, and not the true sacrifice, they were led to look higher and further than the death of the animal they presented, for the pardon of their sins. When therefore you say that sacrifices were 'circumstances attending an address to the Deity,' (ib. p. 190.) you lead away the mind of the reader from the subject; and obscure the meaning of scripture about it. Sacrifices were not mere circumstances attending an address to the Deity; but, as far as they went, they were the *sole ground* on which that address was accepted: by which the design and importance of the *true* sacrifice were shadowed forth. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews went upon this very principle—while he asserts that 'the blood of bulls and of goats' cannot possibly take away sin, yet, at the same time he no less positively declares, that the great work is done by the *one offering* of Jesus Christ. If you please, sir, we will select the sacrifices of the day of expiation to stand for the whole.—See Levit. ch. xvi.

The peculiar sacrifices of that day, after having the sins of priest and people confessed upon them, were to be slain, have their blood sprinkled before the Lord, and then be *wholly burnt*, for a *sin-offering*, as the Lord commanded Moses. But, as the whole design of the anniversary service could not be expressed by these actions, you find the addition of the scape-goat to complete the intention. Sin must not merely

merely be pardoned, but, if one may so speak, it must be prevented from returning to condemnation. Suffering the desert of sin, in the sinner's stead, you behold in the sin-offering—and, if you look to the scape-goat sent into the wilderness never more to be found, you may see the final safety of the sinner by virtue of interest in Christ Jesus. Consider the work of this anniversary *alone*, that is, without reference to something real and true, and the whole is altogether void of instruction. Carry it forwards, as the bible does, to the great sacrifice of Christ, the solemnity is beautifully expressive of every thing interesting to our salvation. The being and desert of sin, are presented full in view—the impossibility of pardon and acceptable approach to God without a sacrifice or sin-offering, are clearly taught us—the incapacity of the sinner to expiate his own crimes and merit the divine smiles, are evidently attested—and, the inefficacy of these sacrifices, though divinely appointed, to obtain these blessings for the offerers, was abundantly manifested by their repetition every year. Draw aside the vail—observe the work of the day in the light of the gospel—and the whole displays a revelation of mercy and grace to sinners—the whole is realized in the death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The scape-goat bore and carried away 'ALL the iniquities of the children of Israel, and ALL their transgressions in ALL their sins.' Lev. xvi. 21. The scape-goat could only carry them away in consequence of the preceding atonement made for them. This was a *type* in the hands of Aaron, in Christ it is *true* and *real*.

Here, sir, allow me to notice the following three things—the sacrifice *appointed* of the Lord—the *design* of that appointment—and the *benefits* derived to Israel in consequence of it.—1. The sacrifice was *appointed* of the Lord. As the glory of Jehovah was the first or ultimate object of that institution, it was not only reasonable but absolutely necessary that every part of it, *exclusively*, should be according to his pleasure. Upon his order and authority therefore the whole depended. Neither Moses, Aaron, nor the congregation, had the least right to dictate, to add to, nor dispense with any thing commanded; either in matter, manner, or intention. As was the *type*, so was the *substance*. The righteous Governor of the universe being pleased to shew mercy to some of Adam's race; it is *solely* his prerogative to chuse the way in which it shall be displayed. This naturally leads us to the *appointment* of our adorable Immanuel,

Immanuel, to be the sacrifice for sin. This thought will be taken up again under the fourth objection in Letter XXXIV. The next thing that presents itself is—2. The *design* of that appointment. This was taught the Israelites by Moses from the Lord. The sacrifice was expressly *designed* to have the sins of the people, ceremonially or typically, laid upon it, and then to be offered up for them, *as bearing their sin*. This idea indeed has always obtained wherever sacrificing animals in a way of religion has been practised; and the whole would be absurd without it. The victims being sacrificed, and the scape-goat being led away, they learnt hereby, as it was *designed* they should, that thus the sinner should have his iniquities blotted out, and his life given him, in consequence of atonement being made for him. If language can have any meaning, these particulars we see fulfilled in Christ. Let us examine them.

The sins of all his people, that is, spiritual Israel, were laid on Christ, as their appointed sacrifice, when he undertook their cause and engaged to assume their nature. If the sins of his people were laid upon him at all, it must be then, because the whole purpose of grace, in the salvation of the church, was from everlasting. And, if they are *not* laid on him, the language and design of revelation seem to be quite unintelligible. But—1. *All the sins of the church are laid on Christ*. Hence we are told, ‘The Lord hath laid,’ or made to meet, ‘on him, the iniquities of us all.’ Isai. liii. 6. ‘My righteous servant shall justify many: for he shall *bear* their iniquities.’ Ver. 11. ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors, and he *bare* the sins of many.’ Ver. 12. ‘Himself *took* our infirmities, and *bare* our sicknesses.’ Matt. viii. 17. ‘Christ was once offered to *bear* the sins of many.’ Heb. ix. 28. ‘Who his own self *bare* our sins in his own body on the tree.’ 1 Pet. ii. 24. Here the voice of scripture seems quite unequivocal, and decisive in its evidence—but, you tell us, that ‘the idea we ought to annex to the term Bearing sin, is that of *bearing it away*, or *removing* it, an effect which is produced by the power of the gospel.’ (ib. p. 202.) What an obscure exposition of the most interesting of all terms! What an opposition to the plainest testimony of heaven! For the power of the gospel, mean what you will by it, can never be understood to convey the same sense, as Christ bearing the sins of his people in his own body, and dying a sacrifice for them! Were you not aware of this, sir? Then, why was not the language

language of scripture adopted, and the sense of scripture given? An effect produced by the *power* of the gospel? How are we to understand this assertion? By the power, do you mean the *ministry* of the gospel? If so, all who heard it would enjoy the blessing; which is not true.—Do you mean having the gospel *applied* to the soul by the Holy Spirit of life and truth? To allow this is to give up your point—and, yet, what you can mean besides, I must wait to be informed. ‘It is not the ‘gospel,’ says a late author, ‘nor gospel ministers, by whom ‘souls are healed and their sins removed; but it is the power ‘of Christ’s own spirit, acting by these, that brings sinners in ‘subjection to the obedience of faith.’ And thus, indeed, you seem to suggest the Savior did it; for you presently add, ‘Christ ‘*bears*, that is, *bears away*, or *removes*, the sins of men, by ‘healing their dilttempered minds, and restoring them to a ‘sound and virtuous state by the power of his gospel.’ There are but two senses in which the sins of men can be borne away or removed.—The one is from the presence of the righteous Lawgiver; the other is from the sinner’s person and conscience: and both these suppose an atonement made—for, without this, the transgressor lies open to the keen remorse of a guilty conscience, and the just displeasure of a sin-avenging God. This doctrine was taught the jews by all their offerings for sin. ‘The phrase, Bearing sin, is *never* applied, ‘under the law,’ you tell us, ‘but to the scape-goat, on the ‘day of expiation, which was not sacrificed, but, as the name ‘expresses, was turned out into the wilderness.’ This strong assertion, delivered in your usual positive manner, I attribute to your precipitance and absence of mind; for, had you only consulted your concordance, you must have seen that you *expresly* contradict the word of truth. If you please just to turn to Lev. x. 17. you will find the sin-offering was given by the Lord to *bear the sin* of the congregation.—This was not the scape-goat. And, if you will trouble yourself so far about it, by consulting Lev. xxii. 9. and Num. ix. 13. you may be informed that persons are said to *bear their own sins* when they die for them.—This evidence should, at least, produce a blush for such rash, unguarded expressions. Besides, sir, you know the goat must *bear* the sins of the people before it could *bear them away*; and, its being turned out into the wilderness *bearing* the sins of the people, was only in consequence of atonement being made by the preceding part of the service; all which was designed to shew the jews, by a lively expressive *type*, the necessity and

design of a *real* sacrifice to be offered in due time. This we see realized in our Lord Jesus Christ; who 'suffered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.' Rom. iv. ult. By the first part of this verse you see the design of the suffering victims fulfilled; and by the last the meaning of the scape-goat. Thus explained, each part is beautiful and instructive; apart from this I see nothing in either. Nor does the evangelist Matthew, in the passage quoted above, adopt a different sentiment from the prophet Isaiah; not only, because the evangelist takes an opportunity to observe that the prophet's words were fulfilled, and therefore could not contradict him; but also, because none but he who had power to heal our sicknesses, could bear away our sin the cause of sickness. Consider the subject therefore in your own terms, and it will be impossible to prove that Christ could *bear away*, or *remove*, the sins of men in any sense that *excludes* his bearing them as a sacrifice. Again,

2. I would observe that it was under this very *consideration* and *description* that he suffered and died. On this account it is that we are taught to receive and trust in him as a *sacrifice* and *offering to God* in our stead. The Lord tells us, by the prophet, that 'his soul was made an offering for sin.' Isaiah, liii. 10. I know you assert that 'the death of Christ is *never* spoken of by the ancient prophets as a 'sin-offering—that the propriety of our translation of this 'text may be doubted—or if it be retained, it cannot be 'proved to exhibit any thing more than a figurative allusion.' (ib. p. 184.) Here I must be permitted to ask a question. A figurative allusion to what? To the Jewish ritual? Was that the substance and Christ the figure? A figurative allusion, you know, must be to something substantial and real; or the whole is empty and void. No, sir; the truth is, the ceremonial sacrifices were figurative allusions to that of Christ, but not his to them. If our translation of this text be retained, therefore, it exhibits, not a figurative allusion, but a most solemn and pleasing fact. Indeed, if we understand the prophet according to your exposition, whether we allow or deny our translation, can be but of little consequence, because it affords the reader no idea at all. A defence of truth can receive no advantage from weakening the authority of our translation without a reason; and a reason for such conduct I do not apprehend that any one can offer. It is a known subterfuge of such characters with which I would not have you to be united; and

and tacitly declares the want of solid argument. If the Savior was not an offering for sin, can you tell me why 'it pleased the LORD to bruise him and put him to grief?' Isaiah, liii. 10. Be so kind as to do me the favor, sir.—You know that the word (ΘΥΝ) *offering for sin*, is not uncommonly used to signify a guilty person—which Christ could no otherwise be than as the substitute and sacrifice of his people; but, in this sense, it is evident he was; for he suffered *as such*. Hence it is said that, 'Christ gave *himself* for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father,' Gal. i. 4. that he 'loved us, and gave himself for us an *offering* and a *sacrifice* to God, for a sweet-smelling favor,' Eph. v. 2. yea, that 'through the eternal Spirit, he *offered* himself without spot to God,' Heb. ix. 14. that 'he appeared in the end of the world, to put away sin by the *sacrifice of himself*, ver. 26. 'that he *offered one sacrifice for sins*,' and that 'by this *one offering*, he hath for ever perfected them who are sanctified,' Ch. x. 12, 14. For this reason only it is that he is called 'a propitiation for our sins.' The word ἱλασμός translated propitiation 'occurs,' you observe, 'but twice in the new testament;' (ib. p. 183.) and, I would remark, that *once* is quite sufficient to ascertain its true import on this subject, because the bible is an harmonious book. There can be no propitiation for sin without a sacrifice or sin-offering; and, therefore, if Christ be a propitiation for our sins, it is only because he suffered for them in our nature and name, and so atoned for them. For this reason he is said 'to make *reconciliation* (ἱλασμεσθαι) for the sins of the people.' Heb. ii. 17. If all this evidence of scripture be only *figurative allusion*, I should be very glad to be told, sir, what is *substantial truth*. If there be a text that preaches the reconciliation of sinners to God, without an expiatory sacrifice, we would own the favor to have it pointed out; but, if there be not, we conclude, from divine authority, that the Lord Jesus Christ is, truly and properly, a piacular sacrifice for the sins of his people.

This naturally leads us to the idea of *substitution*. The sacrifice offered was substituted, that is, put in the place of the transgressor, and suffered in his stead. Moreover, it was not merely made a sin-offering for the offender, but sin; for, had it not been first constituted sin, it could not, with any propriety, have been a sin-offering. This necessarily and always

supposes that. However, the sacrifice did not become, by this substitution, the *actual* transgressor, for then it must have suffered for its own and not the sins of others; which entirely defeats the design of a sacrifice. This idea therefore is equally inapplicable to Christ and to the animals of old. These had the sins of Israel laid upon them, and, as such, in a *type*, suffered for them; which in Christ is verified in *truth* and fact. On this account it is that Christ is said to be '*made sin*' for his people, and not merely a sin-offering; but this only in consequence of that. 2 Cor. v. 21. This may be amply illustrated and confirmed by consulting the sacred oracles. Let us read the following places. 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.' Isai. liii. 5. 'Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness—and after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.' Dan. ix. 24, 26. 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.' Zech. xiii. 7. 'I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I lay down my life for the sheep.' John, x. 11, 15. 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' Rom. v. 6. 'But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' Ver. 8. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Gal. iii. 13. 'For Christ hath once suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' 1 Pet. iii. 18. Here, sir, you have the united testimony of the old and of the new testament writers, in epitome, on this subject; delivered in sacrificial language, and worthy your particular attention. It is in vain to take shelter under 'the strong figurative expressions of the east,' (ib. p. 200.) to avoid this evidence; because no figures can change the nature, or annul the truth of facts. Either Christ died in our stead, and for our sins, according to these scriptures, or he did not. Does a shepherd *lay down* his life while he only '*risks* it?' (idem.) Can he be said to *give* his life, when he is only in hazard of having it *taken away*? It must be a bold figure indeed to represent me as doing that which I *never* did, and that which can *never* be truly said concerning me! This must be an hyperbole with
a wit-

a witness ! and, yet, this is the construction, if any, which you seem desirous of putting on all such parts of the bible ! Is this *defending* christianity ? Let the reader judge. It is much to be lamented that not only the *sense*, but even the *truth*, of the sacred page should be sacrificed to human hypothesis ! In all ages, however, this has been done. Were you pleading a cause on the other side, such language would not satisfy *yourself*, nor would you suppose it satisfactory to your *reader* ; and therefore I can leave you to say, whether it be generous to adopt it on the present occasion. No author would chuse to have the plainest language converted into a figure, and thereby have his meaning explained away : much less the blessed God ! We wish you to be undeceived, sir ; and to remember that we shall not receive an obscure and perverted sense of scripture, while its obvious meaning lies open before us. From the texts quoted above we learn, in the most unequivocal expressions necessary, that Christ actually suffered as the substitute of his church and people ; and not *merely* ‘ on their account.’ If it should be found when this evidence of scripture is ‘ *rigorously* interpreted, that if Christ had not died, ‘ we must have died, yet,’ you say, ‘ it is still however only ‘ *consequentially* so, and by no means *properly* and *directly* so, as ‘ a substitute for us.’ (ib. p. 199.) Yes, sir ; *directly* a substitute for us ; nor could language have been plainer to assert it, unless the term Substitute had been expressed. What ‘ declarations much more definitive and express,’ (ib. p. 200.) you may require, I cannot say ; but I do take the liberty to suppose that nothing short of strong attachment to preconceived hypothesis, would wish for more explicit. However, sir, I have no objection to *consequences* ; if they be fairly drawn from solid premises. See the following. ‘ God so loved the ‘ world that he *gave* his only begotten Son—Christ loved his ‘ church and *gave himself* for it, an offering and a sacrifice to ‘ God’—‘ *consequently*’ the atonement is the fruit of divine love, and the Savior’s sufferings and death. If your *consequences* thus correspond with the word of truth, I shall never oppose what you have to say.

There is one text I observe, among those cited above, whose evidence you seem willing to exclude. ‘ In one passage of the ‘ new testament, Christ is said to have died as a *curse* for us. ‘ Gal. iii. 13.’ (ib. p. 195.) And, what then ? We know full well that ‘ not one sheep or ox of all the cattle of Jericho, ‘ or of the Amalekites, was permitted to be sacrificed ; and, ‘ that nothing accursed was ever suffered to be brought to the
‘ altar

'altar of God'—but, do you not know, sir, that this remark is foreign from the question? Every thing that was not *commanded* to be sacrificed was, in that sense, *accursed*; because it was prohibited. What the law does not command, it forbids. There was no *natural* unfitness in the cattle of Jericho for sacrifice—the whole rested on the will of God. Nor was there any thing 'devoted to destruction' without the prior consideration of sin. But, all figures apart—Paul's language is not figurative—it speaks a glorious *reality*, an interesting *fact*. Let us enquire into its meaning. *What is the curse of the law?* It is a sentence of condemnation passed in consequence of sin. As sinners, we are all under this sentence, not one excepted; and, if this curse be not endured *for us*, by another, we must sustain it in our own persons. But, speaking of the chosen of God, Paul says, 'Christ hath *redeemed* us from the curse of the law, *being made a curse for us.*' Can any unprejudiced man in the world wish for language 'more *definitive* and *express*' on any subject? Can he consult the plain sense of such a text, and yet deny that Christ died as the '*direct substitute*' of his people? One can hardly suppose it possible. True, sir; 'in the Jewish sacrifices the victim was always a clean and useful animal, and perfect in its kind,' having no prior reason or cause, *in itself*, why it should be slain—and, on that account, it the more strongly and beautifully typified our great sacrifice, the Lord of glory; who was 'without blemish and without spot.' 1 Pet. i. 19. Your thought here, if pursued, will help us further to understand the subject in two points which I shall now mention.

The one is, *the language of Paul upon it.* He was *made* a curse for us. This excludes the idea of his being *naturally* liable to what he endured. As sinners we were under the law, that is, exposed to the penalty incurred by a violation of it; nor could we be redeemed from this curse but by some legal substitute, who was both able and willing to endure what we deserved, and *for us.* This Christ did for his church. Hence the apostle says, 'He was *made*,' not born, 'under the law, that he might redeem them who were under the law.' Gal. iv. 4, 5. The redemption of his people from the curse of the law was, you see, the reason of his being made under it. This being the case, sir, you quite invert the order of the question. You say 'Christ may be considered as a curse for us, 'in consequence of his devoting himself to death for us'—whereas the truth is, 'his devoting himself to death' is the plain '*consequence*' of his being made a curse for us: that is, standing
in

in our law-place, and sustaining the penalty which we had incurred. Apart from this his death has no meaning. If things were always properly stated, it would prevent a multitude of weak contentions. I am, &c.

LETTER XXX.

REVEREND 'SIR,

THE other thing I mean is, *the history of his sufferings and death*. 'He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.' 1 Pet. ii. 22. 'He always pleased his Father.' John, viii. 29. On this account there could be no reason or cause, *in himself*, for the sorrows and death which he endured. Perfect innocence must possess perfect happiness. The reverse is impossible. Sin is the sole cause of all pain, and misery, and death. On this consideration no man can give us a satisfactory account of the sufferings and death of the Son of God, I apprehend, if he was not a substitute for sinners. He had done nothing to *deserve* what he endured; nor, apart from this idea, could it answer any end. What good could accrue to a world of sinners from the example of perfect virtue in torture and death! Of what value could the death and resurrection of a simply innocent character be to a race of guilty rebels? Not the least. The apostle Paul was, in some respects, a more extensive, and a more public, example of virtue than the Lord Jesus Christ. But, as no man ever lived a perfectly innocent character in his own person, save the Redeemer; please to give me a reason, sir, why he was overwhelmed in his last hours with such darkness and distress, while his apostles and followers have rejoiced in tribulation, and triumphed in the flames! Your statement of the matter, as far as I can judge of it, seems altogether defective.

'One man,' you say, 'could never make a sufficient atonement for the sins of the *whole world*, or even of the *elect* only.' (ib. p. 208.) This is very true, if Christ be only a mere man like ourselves; for, in that case, his *life* would not have been at his own disposal to lay it down for them, and, his *obedience* being due to the divine law in his own person, it could not have stood to the account of his people. Did you never attentively read and seriously consider the

the following declaration?' 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because *I lay down my life, that I may take it again.* No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.' John, x. 17, 18. Here it is very manifest, I think, that his life was at his own option; which cannot be true of any creature in the universe. And yet it was but his human life of which he spake. Which, by the way, is such a proof of his deity at the same time, that you would do well deliberately to consider it; because, none but the Creator has a right or power to *give or resume* the life of man. And when the Savior says, 'This commandment I received of my Father,' I apprehend he speaks of that mediatorial power and authority which he received in behalf of his chosen; and not of any thing that was natural or essential to his divine or human nature, distinctly or separately considered. Being told that he was *made*, not born, under the law, to redeem them that were under it, you are evidently taught that his obedience and death were the result, not of any prior separate obligation, but simply and solely of this appointment and constitution. This is also attested by the apostle. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.' Rom. viii. 3. The meaning of this text we see fulfilled in the last hours, more especially, of the Savior's life. You say we 'are obliged to suppose things uncommon and undescribable in the agony of Christ, to which nothing in the common feelings of human nature ever corresponded, though at the same time, it was only human nature that suffered.' (ib. p. 209.) This is very true—and we do so, for the two following reasons.—1. If the Savior was only an example of virtue, but truly and perfectly an innocent man, then nothing in the common feelings of human nature could ever correspond to his agony, because, there never was such a character besides. So that, in this view, we 'suppose' nothing in it more than you are 'obliged' to do. This idea, therefore, had it entered your mind, might have abated a little of your opposition. But, we go further and say—2. Nothing in the common feelings of human nature could ever correspond to the agony of Christ; because none, but himself, ever stood the substitute of sinners. And, without a similarity of situation and capacity, there cannot be a similarity

similarity of feeling. Even the feelings of the miserable in hell for ever, will not be similar, much less equal, to those of Christ.

You tell us that 'Our Savior, as an innocent man, could have no terrors of a guilty conscience. And therefore he could feel nothing but the dread of his approaching painful and ignominious death.' (ib. p. 211.) The first part of this assertion we understand and believe, but, respecting the last, it must be said, that innocence has no fears, much less 'dread;' least of all dread of a 'painful and ignominious death:' because innocence is, in no sense, exposed to death. 'But,' you go on to say, 'having a clearer idea of his death as we perceive in the history, and consequently of the agony of it, than other men generally have of approaching sufferings, the apprehension which he was under, no doubt, affected his mind more than we can well conceive.' Innocence, as such, can have no apprehension to affect the mind with the least possible distress; and therefore this part is as unsupported as the former. A little before you said *we* were obliged to suppose something in the agony of Christ that was 'undescrivable;' and now *you yourself* are pleased to say that it was 'more than you can well conceive.' Where, then, sir, is the mighty difference between us! Except indeed, that *you* have the honor to exceed *us*—because you know we may *conceive* what we cannot *describe*. Then you subjoin these words. 'Those who consider Christ as something more than a man, cannot imagine how he should be so much affected in those circumstances; but there is no difficulty in the case with those who consider him as a being made *exactly like themselves*, and perhaps of a delicate tender habit.' Let the Redeemer's habit be as tender and delicate as you please, sir, that could not possibly be the cause, ground, or reason of his sufferings, in whole or in part; and, this being the object of enquiry, you should not lose sight of it, nor divert the reader's attention from it. I must beg leave, therefore, in justice to the subject, still to insist upon it, that, sin apart, and he had none of his own, you cannot account for his sufferings and death; because it is impossible for God to punish an innocent creature; *as such*. The deity of Christ does not in the least prevent his being so much affected in those circumstances, as was hinted before; because, though his natures were wonderfully united, yet, they were not confounded; and, therefore, there is no 'difficulty in the case,' with us. Whereas to 'those

' who consider him as a being *made exactly like themselves*, the difficulty must be totally insuperable ; because they cannot give a *reason* for his being brought into ' those circumstances.' On this account, sir, the matter lies open for your further reflection. And, if you can satisfy the public upon this head, no doubt but you will do it. I know it may be said, by a necessarian, ' that he was delivered by ' the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God '—and this is true—but then I must be allowed to ask—' What was ' the *design* of that counsel and knowledge in delivering ' Christ ? ' Was it to make innocence a pattern of suffering ? Impossible ! If sin be out of the question, I am just where I was before. Do reflect upon this, sir.

' As to the sins of others,' you say, ' it is natural to suppose that his mind would be less at leisure to attend to ' them then, than at any other time, his mind being necessarily occupied with a *sense* of his own sufferings ; and ' accordingly we find that all he says upon that occasion respects himself only. Father, if it be possible, let this cup ' pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou ' wilt.' (ib. p. 212.) Yes, sir ; but what was ' this cup ' which the Father had given to Christ ? A cup of sufferings and of sorrows. What for ? To try, and discover his innocence ? By no means. Suffering can be no proof of innocence. Was it to make him an example of virtue ? What ! instruct guilty rebels by punishing innocence ? How absurd ! No, sir ; as Christ had no sin of his own for which to suffer, so, he could not have suffered at all, had he not stood in the law-place of his people, to drink the cup of righteous displeasure which they had deserved. This excluded, the history of the garden and the cross is the most unaccountable that could be devised ; take this key to it, and the whole presents a scene of solemn mercy and awful grace. ' Mercy ' and truth, righteousness and peace,' unite their beams in the sufferings of Christ and the sinner's salvation. ' That ' the presence of God forsook him, whatever be meant by ' it,' you say ' is not at all supported by fact.' What you mean by the presence of God in the case before us, I cannot tell—but you should have told us, I think, before you had been so peremptory. How to understand the term ' Fact ' in this place, I do not know—but nothing can be more manifest than that Christ was *forsoaken* of his Father, in a certain sense. I mean that Christ was now left without a sense of his Father's gracious smiles, and was filled with a sense of the

the divine displeasure against sin. 'He went through the scene of his trial and crucifixion,' you tell us, 'with wonderful composure, and without the least appearance of any thing like agony of mind.' On reading this I was surprized at your peculiar inattention.—'How is it possible,' said I, 'for any one to use such language!' Is it a mark of 'wonderful composure,' sir, to be so much oppressed with sorrow as to need an angel sent *on purpose* to comfort and strengthen him? Luke, xxii. 43. Can you hear the Savior say to his disciples, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?' Matt. xxvi. 38. to his Father, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?' Ver. 39.—Can you hear it said of him, that 'he was amazed, and being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and sweat as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground?' Luke, xxii. 44. And, hear him say on the cross, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Matt. xxvii. 46. I say, sir, is it possible for you to read all this, and yet assert that he 'went through the scene of his trial and crucifixion, with wonderful composure!' If words can be allowed to have any meaning, directly the contrary of your assertion, one should suppose, must appear to the most superficial, and even prejudiced reader. That he was forsaken of God, cannot be more fully proved a 'fact' than by his own pathetic exclamation just before he expired; unless he lamented the absence of what he enjoyed! How unmeaning, sir! how insipid! to suppose nothing more was designed by that cry than just 'reciting the first verse of the 22d psalm!' However, that verse had some meaning in the mouth of David, and of Christ. Do be so kind, sir, as to tell us what it was, that we may form some judgment of it. If any person will sit down and read the history of our Lord's sufferings, believing it to be a true narrative, I cannot help thinking but his idea of that subject must be directly opposite to your bold assertion, in every respect. It has been asserted, and can easily be proved, that God cannot punish, or afflict, an innocent creature, *as such*; and, therefore, to talk of what Christ would 'naturally suffer,' is merely begging the question, and ought to be rejected. *Whence* came the sufferings of Christ? They may be said to begin, more especially, when he was in the garden. They could not therefore arise from the jews nor the Romans; and yet, then it was he said, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.' He was overwhelmed with grief. That was the hour of the prince of dark-

darkness. Luke, xxii. 53. Surely he was not afraid of men—had he been so, he could have easily escaped their hands. This is manifest from their falling to the ground when they came to apprehend him. John, xviii. 6. Whence then could his sufferings come? Whence indeed! but from the avenging sword of justice now awakened against him, as *bearing* the sins of all his people! This one thought explains the whole; and shews us, in the brightest mirror, the evil of sin, the justice and mercy of God in saving his chosen vessels. Apart from this, the whole is so obscure, yea impenetrably dark, that it is totally unintelligible and unmeaning.

So much, sir, for the Lord's *design* in appointing the jewish anniversary sacrifices. And such, in part, is the evidence of Christ's *bearing* the sins of his people, and *suffering for them*, as their atoning sacrifice. The third thing proposed was, to name the *benefits* derived to Israel through these sacrifices.—But I must beg leave to refer this article to the third general topic of proof, which will be considered in the next letter but one.

Before I dismiss the sacrificial language of scripture, you will suffer me to drop a word on the office of *priesthood*. I need not say that a priest is a relative character, for all official titles necessarily are so. The high priest was appointed of old by the Lord 'to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.' Heb. v. 1. The office—the man to fill it—and the work he had to do; were all of divine original. An office, without one to fill it, would be a mere sound; and the office when filled, without appointed work, would not be much more. But, when the whole is complete, it is quite natural to ask—'To what *purpose* is all this directed?' If Aaron of old, with his office and work, had no reference to, nor were appointed, *typically*, to represent any future *reality*; we may venture to assert, without apology, that the whole was empty and without design! But, what modest man would even suppose it? However, there is no alternative, in my apprehension, but allowing that Christ is the substance of that shadow. If divine wisdom meant any thing by that institution, it was this; and, if not this, it was nothing. Here, sir, I wish you to pause a moment, and consider consequences. If I am too precipitate, you can correct my haste; but, if I am not, you must abide the issue.

Man is a sinner; and, till his sin be pardoned, he can never be happy. This pardon he cannot obtain himself. If it be
not

not done for him he must be miserable for ever. But the bible sheds a light upon us, and opens a prospect of the blessing ; with the ground and medium of bestowment. The ground or *cause* of it is the sovereign will of God—the *medium*, a sacrifice ; for ‘ *without shedding of blood is NO remission.*’ Heb. ix. 22. All sacrifices acceptably offered suppose a priest, by whom they are presented to the Lord. So that there is no separating between the pardon of my sins and a priest who has made atonement for them. This is the evident sense of scripture—this alone relieves the mind of the convinced sinner—and this leads to the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great gospel sacrifice. A wounded conscience can have no more peace from a figurative sacrifice or priest, than from a figurative pardon ; the bare idea of which is an insult on common sense. That scheme of christianity, if it may be so called, which admits of this sentiment, is a mere rope of sand, and will leave the sons of Adam in a most deplorable state of misery for ever.

It is highly probable that the *priesthood* has existed, in fact, from the beginning ; though the term be of later date ; and though now it be abolished. There was the same reason, *in itself*, for sinful Adam to be taught the doctrine and use of sacrifices, as for the nation of the jews. Nor is it improbable that he was thus instructed. Nor can we otherwise account, perhaps, for the notion of sacrificing in the pagan world ; if traced to the fountain. Though all the jews were the Lord’s, both as creatures and as a nation, yet, in a peculiar manner, he claimed the first born. Hence they were commanded to ‘ sanctify *all* the first born to the Lord,’ Exod. xiii. 2. that is, set them apart to his more immediate service. This act of Jehovah, I apprehend, had a higher end than merely a reference to the death of the first born of the Egyptians ; it had respect to the *priesthood*. And, under this consideration, a particular eye to Christ, who is the first born of the family of heaven ; their elder brother and head of the church. With propriety therefore he is their priest, and has offered a sacrifice and made atonement for them. On which account he says, with a great deal of justice and truth, ‘ I go to my Father, and your Father ; to my God, and your God.’ John, xx. 17. But, when God formed the jews into a national church, more fully to represent his gospel church, as a collected body, under certain laws and possessing peculiar privileges, in distinction from the prior scattered state of his ancient servants, and hence called ‘ a holy nation,’ 1 Pet. ii. 9. I say, when this was done, there was

was great wisdom discovered in transferring his more immediate right to the first born at large to the tribe of Levi; because, to have continued that right would have created confusion and disorder, as well as have been superfluous. Yet, still, as that tribe was chosen, the first born was not neglected, but raised to a higher rank than before. Aaron was the first born of that tribe then alive, Ekod. vii. 20. vii. 7. him therefore the Lord appointed to the *priesthood*, and confined it to his family. But, nevertheless, the first born was to be the successor in their several generations. Aaron, however, did not *claim* this honor, but received it only in consequence of divine appointment; and hence Christ, who is the fulness and glory of that type, is said, 'not to glorify *himself* in being made our high priest, but him who called *him*.' Heb. v. 4, 5. From which it appears that Christ was as truly appointed the high priest of his church, as Aaron was to the Jewish church; and, no doubt, for a corresponding purpose; allowing for the difference between the type and antitype.

Whatever was the work of the Jewish high priest on the day of expiation, in *type*; the same we see fulfilled by Christ, in *truth*: except only, that Christ had no sins of his own for which to atone. For every high priest is ordained to 'offer gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is of necessity that *this man* have somewhat also to offer.' Heb. viii. 3. But he need not offer sacrifices for *himself*, because he was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,' Heb. vii. 26. and therefore his sacrifice must be for others, even the sins of his people, which were imputed to him and laid upon him. The sacrifice of the day being offered, the high priest entered within the veil with the blood of his sacrifice before the mercy-seat, to *intercede* for the same people for whom he had made atonement. This is also true of Christ. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For Christ is not entered into the *holy places* made with hands, which are the *figures* of the *true*; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.' Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24. Was reconciliation the result of that service by Aaron? Lev. vi. 30. So it is of

of Christ. 'He made *reconciliation* for the sins of the people.' Heb. ii. 17. 'He *reconciled* both jews and gentiles unto God in one body by the cross.' Eph. ii. 16. 'He made peace through the blood of his cross, to *reconcile* all things unto God, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.' Col. i. 20. And, indeed, that the work of the jewish atonement had a reference to Christ, as a type to its antitype, is so clearly told us that, unless we chuse it, we cannot but understand it in that light. That ritual 'serves to the example and *shadow* of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle.' For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.' Heb. viii. 5. 'For the law had a *shadow* of good things to come, &c.' Chap. x. 1. The pattern shewed to thee in the mount, said the Lord to Moses.—Here you behold the plan laid out in the divine mind, and described to Moses. Its various parts and uses are named, both as to things and persons. The *tabernacle*, and all its furniture—the *sacrifices*, in their respective kinds, with the reason and manner of being offered—the *priests*, in their order, dress, and work—to fit up a ritual which was to endure for near fifteen hundred years, and never to be slighted without sin. And yet, all this, on your principle, was to be without meaning *in itself*, or referring to any thing that was *substantial* and *true*. He that can receive this must be a credulous man indeed! Besides, the weakness of that economy was not merely manifest in the *repetition* of their sacrifices, but also in the *death* of their high priest—whereas, Christ, our high priest, has 'by his ONE offering' for ever perfected them that are sanctified,' Heb. x. 14. and, ever living, 'he has an *unchangeable*,' an intransible, 'priest-hood.' Ch. vii. 24. For this reason he is said to be 'a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.' Ch. v. 6, 10. and ch. vii. 21. A shadow supposes a substance, and a type a reality, to which they agree; or they are absolute nullities, and mere creatures of the fancy. The ceremonial law is called a shadow and a type—but, of what? If not of Christ, of nothing; because nothing else exists, nor ever did exist, of which they are *said* to be, or of which they *could* be, either type or shadow. But, in Christ you see the several parts of that ritual so completely realized, that no man can wish to see a substance and shadow, or type and antitype, more exactly correspond.

Yes,

Yes, sir; I know you say that Christ being called a high priest, as well as a sacrifice, 'might have given us to understand, that both the representations are merely figurative, because both taken together are hardly consistent, at least they make a very harsh figure, and introduce confusion into our ideas,' (ib. p. 184.) They are hardly consistent! With what, pray, are they inconsistent? Should you not have told us, sir? No doubt of it. You will do it another time. Is it with your *creed*? I am sorry for it. I wish it were otherwise: Is it with the *word of God*? There they are revealed; or we had not known them. And, there we are told, they were divinely ordained and appointed; so that they are not inconsistent with the divine will nor wisdom. Nor are they inconsistent with God's way of saving sinners; for they are the very medium of bestowing the blessing. And, if so, I think we may safely leave all the rest to your second thoughts. What harshness or confusion can there be in '*idea*,' or in fact, in seeing a priest offer a sacrifice? Not the least, in my opinion. Nor can there be any if the priest offer *himself* for the sacrifice; because the idea, and the fact, of a priest offering a sacrifice, are still the same, either way.—But, you say, they are '*merely figurative*.' Every description, you know, sir, even if it be a figurative one, has something or nothing for its object—consequently the terms Priest and Sacrifice, when used of Christ, must be designed to describe a reality or a nullity.—I think I will leave this matter for you to settle for us. Do be so kind, sir. That '*christians in general are called priests*' (ib. p. 186.) we are sensible; but never in the same sense as Christ is so called. One would almost suppose that you *knew* this.—If you *did*, you ought to have shewn us the difference and not thus to have left it open. But this might probably have proved unfavorable to your hypothesis. If you *do not* know this difference, you are to be informed. Accept, therefore, sir, a little instruction on this head. Is it ever said of a christian, that '*he bore our sins in his own body on the tree*?' that '*he is a merciful and faithful high priest to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*?' Is any thing like this said of '*christians in general*,' or of any individual? And yet this is *expressly* declared of the Son of God! For what purpose then was this remark made without your noticing the difference? You can tell us, perhaps, if you please. The church of Christ is called '*a holy priesthood*, to offer up
' spi-

* spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.' 1 Pet. ii. 5. They cheerfully give themselves, their time and talents to his glory, to be employed in his service. This they do, as under the influence of the Holy Spirit, according to his word. For this reason they are called *spiritual* sacrifices. It is the distinguishing characteristic of a true christian, to make the word of God his *rule*, to follow the Spirit of God as his *guide*, and to aim at the glory of God as his *end*. Nor does he apprehend that the last can be effected, if the two former be not included. And all this is done 'by Jesus Christ.' Because it is only *in him* that our persons and services are accepted in the eyes of infinite holiness. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

REVEREND SIR,

AFTER the sacrificial language of scripture in proof of the atonement, it was proposed, if you recollect, to consider,

II. The *characters* of Christ immediately connected with this subject. Let me name the following four—such as, Mediator, Surety, Savior, and Redeemer. I do not remember that you say any thing about these characters. But why should they be passed in silence? Are they insignificant? Could they not be reduced to a figure? The truth is, they are of the last importance in a sinner's salvation—and, yet, without the atonement they are nothing. They must be either mere empty sounds, or expressive of gracious and interesting truth. Truth, equally interesting to the manifestative glory of God, and the final felicity of his people.

A *mediator*, even among men, necessarily supposes an offence given and taken. So here. The *offence* is sin; the *offended* is the righteous Lawgiver. While this state of alienation continues, there can be no intercourse. The holiness and justice of God engage him to maintain the rights of his government which sin insults; and sin, in effect, drives away the sinning creature from God. This being the case, the sinner, *as such*, is no more disposed to hold communion with heaven, than a pure and righteous being, *as such*, is at liberty to smile upon him. Were things to remain thus, not one sinner could be happy while God lives.

G g

Mi.

Miserable, however, as the state of the sinner is, it is not with him that reconciliation begins. This remark is founded on the plainest of all facts. It is an assertion without exception. If, therefore, reconciliation should take place, and the sinner be made happy, the free, undeserved grace of God must have the glory. If God chose to shew mercy, when he might have been just in the sinner's final misery; he had an undoubted right to impart the favor in a way that should testify the truth and glory of his character. Nay, he had not only *a right* to do so, but it was absolutely *necessary* it should be done; because 'he cannot deny himself, nor give his glory to another.'

Here, sir, give me leave to make the following observations. That, the offended party, among creatures, who has a right to avenge the wrong done, may appoint what mode of reconciliation he pleases, provided it be just and equitable.—That, where any given number of offenders is concerned, he may select whom among them he chuses, without censure, to make the recipients of his favor.—That, the mediator by whom this lost intercourse is restored, should be equal to the undertaking; or the design must prove abortive.—And, that, none can be equal to such business, but one who is a competent judge of the nature and desert of the offence; and, who has it in his power to accomplish his design. These ideas, by analogy, naturally open our way to the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of him it is expressly said, that, he is the Mediator between God and men: 1. Tim. ii. 5.—That he was appointed to that work of the Father; for, 'he is the man of his right hand, the son of man whom he made strong for himself.' Ps. lxxx. 17. He is the Holy One, of whom the Father says, 'I have laid help upon One that is mighty: I have exalted one chosen out of the people.' Ps. lxxxix. 19.—That he only is equal to the important work; for none knows the desert and evil of sin but God against whom it is committed: and hence the Mediator is, '*God with us.*' Matt. i. 23.—He is our '*day-man,*' who can lay his hand on both, Job, ix. 33. and obtain the end designed. Moreover, his appointment and undertaking are the fruit of eternal love and sovereign grace; and therefore he is called the '*Mediator of a better covenant,*' Heb. viii. 6. that is, the covenant of grace and not of works.

The *ultimate* design of his mediation was the glory of the divine character in the salvation of his chosen. 'All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by
Jesus'

‘ Jesus Christ. For God was in Christ reconciling the world ‘ unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.’ 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.’ The more *immediate* intention of it was to open a way for God to manifest the riches of grace to the guilty rebel; so that the hell-deserving sinner might experience the gracious smiles of a just and holy God. On this account it is that Christ says of himself, ‘ I am the way, ‘ and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father, ‘ but by me.’ John, xiv. 6. This was typified of old to the jews by the mercy-seat (כפרת). The word Caphar signifies to cover, as Noah did his ark; and to make atonement, or reconciliation, by covering sin; which can only be done by bearing it and suffering for it, in the stead of the sinner. The mercy-seat covered the ark of the covenant which contained the law of God on tables of stone.—This type was not designed to teach the jews the nullity or destruction of the moral law by Christ; but the honorable fulfilment of all its demands, both in precept and penalty: and, therefore, our Lord says, when on earth, ‘ Think not that I am come ‘ to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.’ Matt. v. 17. And hence it is said of Christ that he is our propitiation, or mercy-seat (ἱλαστήριον). ‘ God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, through faith ‘ in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission ‘ of sins.’ Rom. iii. 25. The original word used by the apostle is the same by which the seventy often translate the hebrew for mercy-seat—and it is equally expressive of our present doctrine; namely, the mediation of Christ by atonement. This character of Christ is realized in all the obedience, sufferings, and work which he undertook, and has performed in the nature and name of his church and people. No other way was adequate to the great and holy design of the eternal God; who is as necessarily obliged to support his own glory, as he is freely disposed to save the objects of his special favor. Though it was from the mercy-seat that the Lord communed with his people of old by the high priest; yet the high priest dare not enter within the vail but with the blood atonement. So here. Though it is in Christ that God holds fellowship with his people, yet it is only in Christ crucified, and in consequence of his being thereby the sacrifice and atonement for them. To sinners out of Christ he is a consuming fire; but to his chosen Israel he is seated between the cherubim, where they may approach

him and receive the blessings of his grace. The mercy-seat answered exactly to the dimensions of the ark of the covenant—the life and death of Christ correspond precisely to the moral law; to let us know that he has ‘magnified it, and made it honorable.’ *Isai. xlii. 21.* Nothing less than this was sufficient to bear the weight of reconciliation between a holy Lawgiver and his sinful creatures. No ‘*mere man like ourselves*,’ though the most perfect mirror of virtue; much less a *figurative* character; can be equal to the vast design. If the adorable Jesus has not made reconciliation for us, by his own sacrifice, we must perish, we must all perish, for ever; for, ‘*there is salvation in no other.*’ *Acts, iv. 12.* But, blessed be God, the bible is express on the delightful subject, and we are safe in the power of his *intercession*.

A *surety*, in our present use of it, puts himself in the place of the original debtor, out and out, as the civilians sometimes speak. I mean, he does not engage to pay IF the debtor cannot; but, BECAUSE he cannot. The debt we now owe to our great Creator and Lord, as *creatures*, is perfect obedience; and, as *sinners*, we are under obligation to bear the punishment which sin deserves. Sin is not like a pecuniary debt, to be paid in kind; for, if so, the more a man sinned the less would he be in debt. Perfect obedience and a defiled nature—a pure nature and imperfect obedience, are ideas that cannot be admitted. The Creator furnished man with a pure nature; and perfect obedience was his reasonable service and bounden duty. In this, however, he failed; both for himself and his posterity. In consequence of that failure, the penalty incurred may be justly inflicted; nor is it in his power to avert the sentence, nor supersede the execution. The debt is ten thousand talents; and he has nothing to pay. As the law, and lawgiver, are perfectly righteous, holy, and true, there can be no abatement—the honor of the divine government must be supported and revealed. As obedience was not rendered, but punishment deserved, the sinner, or a surety for him, if the divine favor be *enjoyed*, must give satisfaction to the injured justice and offended majesty of God. This, the transgressor cannot possibly do.—And, yet, through the riches of divine grace, we are not without hope; for, ‘Jesus is the *surety* of a better testament;’ *Heb. vii. 22.* that is, the new and everlasting covenant. A *surety* is admitted for the satisfaction of him to whom he stands in that relation; and always implies a suspected or known defect in him for whom he engages. For this reason it is impossible for the Redeemer to be surety for
God

God to us, because there can be no defect—but is absolutely necessary *for us to God*, if ever we enjoy the divine smiles. Nor is it unworthy our most affectionate regard, that the surety and the savior is one and the same person—and that he becomes the savior by fulfilling his engagement as a surety.

Savior likewise is a character very frequently, and very emphatically, given to the Son of God, in relation to his church. Were he a savior only by *example*, or *ministry*, it would be a mere name; and prove of no avail to sinners. It would shew them indeed their duty; but leave them without strength to do it, and without hope in case of failure. The Savior's life was perfect; ours is not. Even those under the old testament whom Nehemiah calleth *saviors*, did not acquire the character from any example they laid before the people; but because they actually '*saved* them out of the hands of 'their enemies.' Neh. ix. 27. Nor is the application of it less obvious in the person of our great High Priest. Before he was born, yea, before he was conceived, the angel said, 'His name shall be called JESUS.' Luke, i. 31. Every one knows that *Jesus* signifies a savior. However, if this should not be *real*, but merely a name of distinction from others, it would then import no more, you know, sir, than your being called *Joseph*, and my being called *Samuel*. But this matter is settled to our hands. The sacred informant, or heavenly messenger, says, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall 'SAVE his people from their sins.' Matt. i. 21. Not save his people *in* their sins, but *from* them—not merely *reform*, but truly *save* them—not only shew them a good *example*, but *actually deliver* them, both from the penalty, pollution, and power of sin. And this could not be done, but by assuming their nature, and by obeying the precepts and sustaining the penalty of the law of God, in their name and stead. On this ground *alone* salvation stands. For this reason the same heavenly herald says to Joseph, what the Spirit of prophecy had before declared by Isaiah, 'They shall call his name 'EMMANUEL, which, being interpreted, is, *God with us*.' Matt. i. 23.—God in our nature—'God manifested in the 'flesh.' 1 Tim. iii. 16. Were but the speaker allowed to know his own meaning, and his language to be intelligible, one can hardly suppose that such passages could be misunderstood or misapplied.

Two things are necessarily implied in the salvation of Christ—namely, the *misery* and *impotence* of the saved. If there be
no

no misery felt, or feared; salvation would be an unmeaning sound. And, if the miserable could save themselves, the provision of another would be superfluous. But infinite wisdom does nothing in vain. It is not without an important and glorious design that the Lord of life says of himself, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to *save* that which was lost.' Luke, xix. 10. Nor are the following passages of an inspired apostle void of emphatical meaning. Speaking of Christ he says, 'Being made perfect, he became the *author* of eternal salvation to all them who obey him.' Heb. v. 9. 'Wherefore he is *able* also to *save* them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Ch. vii. 25. And this salvation is entirely, from first to last, the fruit and work of infinite love and favor. 'For, by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the *gift* of God,' Eph. ii. 8. 'For he hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to *his own purpose and grace*, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.' 2 Tim. i. 9. In short, 'It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' Heb. ii. 10. Upon the whole, it very evidently appears, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole effective cause of the salvation of every sinner that enters the abodes of bliss. And he saves them by *not saving* himself. That is, he performed that obedience which was *due* to the divine law from them, and endured that penalty to which they were *liable* in consequence of sin: by virtue of which they enjoy all the blessings of a free and full salvation.

Redeemer also is another character of Christ connected with the atonement. 'As for our redeemer,' saith the prophet, 'the Lord of hosts is his name, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called.' Isai. xlvii. 4. liv. 5. His literal Israel, the posterity of Abraham, he himself redeemed out of the house of bondage, and out of the land of Egypt, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; according to his purpose and promise. They are not said to be redeemed by a sin-offering, or by a price paid into the hand of Pharaoh, for his enslaving them was an usurpation; and therefore he was destroyed: yet there was a memorable action attending their deliverance, which should not be forgotten—I mean their slaying the *pascal lamb*. Though 'no propitiation, or atonement, is said to have been made by it;' (ib. p. 197.) yet it

was designed to call their attention to a higher and nobler redemption than what they then enjoyed. It is 'once' called 'a sacrifice;' (ib. p. 196.) and that 'once' is quite sufficient to ascertain its typical design; because it shewed them, in a figure, that while the Lord displays his righteous displeasure on the workers of iniquity, he will save them who are interested in the sacrifice of his Son. This is not obscurely taught us by Christ's suffering for his people at the feast which commemorated that event; and it is confirmed by Paul's expressly saying, that, '*Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*' 1 Cor. v. 7. Nor, indeed, could Paul be supposed to have any meaning but this, unless you call his words 'a figurative allusion;' and that would make one figurative allusion explain another; or, rather leave the whole in mist and clouds, without any explanation at all. Besides, sir, you should have given us the whole passage, that the reader might have seen the connection. It is this, Exod. xii. 25—27. where the posterity of the jews is represented, when in Canaan, as asking their parents this question respecting the passover, 'What mean ye by this service?' To which they are taught to give this answer to their children—'It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.' It is not therefore sufficient, sir, to say that 'Christ is compared to the jewish pascal lamb;' (idem.) because, from hence it appears that lamb was actually a type of what Christ is in reality; and that our deliverance, or redemption by him, is as real from sin, as theirs was from Egypt.

There was another branch of that œconomy which led the faithful among them to the redemption of the gospel. It was this. When a man, through poverty, had mortgaged or sold his inheritance, or himself, and was not able to recover the sale or mortgage by his own ability; the right of redemption devolved always and only on a near kinsman, one of his own family. This shews us the meaning of all those places in which Christ is spoken of in that relation to his church; and by which that type is fulfilled in our Redeemer. The texts in the old testament where the word (כֹּחֵן) Redeemer, Kinsman, occurs, and cannot be applied to a creature, are too numerous to be named; which is more than presumptive evidence that the faithful of that day were directed to the same almighty friend for redemption, to which every poor sinner is directed in the present. All the chosen of God are, by sin, reduced to a much worse state of wretchedness than a poor jew could be,

he, when he sold himself to his rich brother for food to save his life; and equally incapable of SELF-redemption. Nor can the highest creature obtain redemption for them. Man, by nature, is the slave of sin, the captive of Satan, under the arrest of offended justice, and a child of wrath; from which none can redeem and deliver him but '*the Holy ONE of Israel*.' The most pure, and the most happy and powerful of all creatures, has neither pity nor strength sufficient for such an undertaking. It is the *exclusive* right and glory of our near kinsman, our goel, to effect and apply such a gracious design.

Redemption is accomplished by *price* and by *power*. The latter was displayed in Israel's release from Egypt—nor is the manifestation of it less in the sinner's being 'called out of darkness into marvellous light;' 1 Pet. ii. 9. when he is '*delivered* from the power of darkness, and *translated* into the kingdom of God's dear Son.' Col. i. 13. But this redemption by *power* is consequent on a ransom paid for that end; because none are emancipated but those who are purchased. Justice has an inviolable claim till satisfaction be made for the injury sin has done; but, this satisfaction being given, justice becomes the invincible guardian of the redeemed. Redemption by *price* likewise is so clearly revealed, that one can hardly help wondering how it should be overlooked. That this price was paid to the devil, is such a departure from serious argument, that it scarcely deserves to be named. It was due to none but an offended lawgiver; and therefore it can only be given to injured justice. And into the hands of justice a full satisfaction *must* be paid, or the sinner will remain for ever under the arrest of judgment. But, this being done, all those whose names are enrolled in the Lamb's book of life are thereby redeemed, and their emancipation in time, and their final glory in eternity, are as sure as their existence; and their existence is as certain as the throne of God.

The *price* of redemption, you know, sir, must be adequate to the desert and obligation of the redeemed—must be paid expressly in their name and for their deliverance—and justice, to which they are bound by a broken law, must consider and receive it as such; or no deliverance ensues.—But, when we see the chief of sinners sharing all the privileges of gospel freedom, we conclude, on the surest evidence, that all these are gracious facts; because, no effects can exist without a corresponding and adequate cause. That the Lord Jesus Christ *gave himself* the redemption-price of his church and people, I think cannot be made plainer than it is in the word of God.

Let

Let us hear it. He gave his life a *ransom* for many. Matt. xx. 28. He *purchased* the church with his own blood. Acts, xx. 28. He gave himself a *ransom* for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Tim. ii. 6. He gave himself for us, that he might *redeem* us from all iniquity. Tit. ii. 14. We are redeemed from our vain conversation by the *precious blood* of Christ. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. For this reason his people are called 'a *purchased possession*,' Eph. i. 14. 'a *peculiar*,' or *purchased*, 'people,' 1 Pet. ii. 9. And hence Paul says of Christ that he is 'entered into the holy place, having *obtained* eternal redemption for us.' Heb. ix. 12. If this evidence should fail of producing conviction and credit, I freely confess I cannot conceive what could make it sufficient for that purpose.—To this idea Moses alludes in his elegant song on the shore of the Red Sea.—Speaking of the certain defeat of the Canaanites, and the triumph of Israel, he says, 'Fear and dread shall fall upon them, by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone: till thy people pass over, O Lord; till the people pass over, which thou hast *purchased*.' Exod. xv. 16. And Job, though no Israelite, was so well taught on this subject, that, when he speaks of his *Redeemer*, he calls him his *god*, his near kinsman; ch. xix. 25. and, of the *ransom* that saves from death, he says, it is *copher*, *atonement*, or *reconciliation*. Ch. xxxiii. 24. And this is the very idea that Jehovah himself taught the Jews to have of that term, as Num. xxxv. 31. The Lord says, 'Ye shall take no *satisfaction*, *ransom*, or *atonement* (*copher*), for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death: but he shall surely be put to death.' The price of redemption is, therefore, in its most obvious import, a *satisfaction* to offended justice for the life of the sinner. Such is the death of Christ in behalf of his people.

On this subject, however, you drop one hint that ought not to pass unnoticed. 'In all these cases,' you say, 'the price of redemption is said to have been given by Christ, but had we been authorized to interpret these expressions as if we had been doomed to die, and *Christ* had interposed, and offered his life to the Father in the place of ours, the representation might have been expected to be uniform; whereas, we find, in general, that the price of our redemption is given by God, as John, iii. 36. Rom. viii. 32.' (ib. p. 201, 202.) What uniformity of representation you may 'expect,' I cannot say; but, it is very manifest that you have not stated the matter properly, and truly. As far as it relates to the Father's giving his Son to be the head over all things to his church,

H h

though

though the terms may sometimes be diversified, yet the sentiment is perfectly one. Nor do I suppose that you are so capricious as to *'expect'* a perfect identity of words and syllables on the subject. This would be too supercilious a temper for the weakest of mankind.—And when the sacred page informs us, that, *the Son gave himself for us*, though the phraseology may a little vary in one place from another, yet the doctrine is most evidently the same; nor can a reasonable man wish it to be more clearly and fully asserted. So that, if the matter be taken up as it ought to be, and not the actions of the Father and the Son confounded, I think it must be impossible to name a subject that is *'represented'* with more *'uniformity'* and precision than this. Is the Father ever said to give his Son a sacrifice for us, as the price of our redemption? Let the place be found. But, is not this said *expressly* of Christ? With what propriety then could you assert that, *'in general'*, the price of our redemption is found to be given by God? Be so obliging, at your leisure, as to inform the public to whom God gave his Son to be the price of our redemption.—This, indeed, you ought to do; and, as you so widely differ from what appears to be the scripture account of the subject, you will be very clear and explicit. Yes, sir; we know that the Father chose and appointed the Son to be the covenant head and representative of all his feed—but, when the price of redemption came to be paid, that was not the *act*, nor the *gift*, of the Father; nor is it ever so called; but it was truly and only the *act*, *work*, and *gift* of the Son, offering *himself* to insulted and injured justice for the complete deliverance of his body the church. The severest critic imaginable must fail, in my poor opinion, in attempting to make the scripture representation of this subject want *'uniformity.'* It is true, the two passages to which you refer us, declare the sovereign love, and the infinite justice, of the Father, in the gift and sufferings of his own Son; but not the least hint do they afford by which we are to learn that the price of our redemption was the gift of God the Father. Had not the Father SO loved the world as to give his only begotten Son—and, had he spared him when he stood the substitute of his people; that is, had not divine justice treated him as their sacrifice and surety; we had all been in the same state as the fallen angels are: without help, and without hope. Yet, still, the price of our redemption was the voluntary, personal, and proper act and

work

work of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That guilty rebels are *spared*, and saved, is an instance of amazing grace in the great and blessed God—and it is no less a display of unfulfilled purity and righteousness in *not sparing* his dear Son, when he appeared to pay the price of their redemption.

If Christ be, in a true and proper sense, the mediator, surety, savior, and redeemer of his people, the doctrine of atonement is a divinely revealed truth—but, if he be not, we must all perish; and the prophets, apostles, and even Christ himself, will appear to be either false witnesses of God, or totally unintelligible in what they delivered. This, however, is what no *real* friend to religion can admit; nor is there any reason why he should.

I shall finish this letter with a remark, which, though it may appear foreign to some, strikes my mind in a pleasing light. In the new testament, you know, sir, believers are called *christians* from *Christ* (Χριστιανοὶ à Χριστῷ); to teach us the peculiar relation subsisting between them; with the present and future felicity and glory of the church in consequence of it. A similar idea was taught the old testament-saints, and for the same reason, by the word *Goel*, or near-kinsman. See the following instance. The Redeemer (רִדְּמָנִי) shall come to Zion; and shall make way for the *ransomed*, or *redeemed* (פְּדוּיָי), to possess his holy mountain. By which you observe that the Redeemer, and the redeemed, stand in the same relation to each other as christians and Christ; being only different words used to describe the same persons. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

REVEREND SIR,

WHAT passed in the eternal mind respecting the salvation of his church, we can only learn from the word of truth. The bible shews us the thoughts of God on this subject; and his hand fulfils his word. The end and means are equally present to an infinite understanding. The blessings bestowed on his people in time, hold up to our view, so far, the plan of eternity. For this reason you hear

Paul say, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.' Eph. i. 3, 4. This leads us to the next proposed argument in proof of the atoning sacrifice of Christ—

III. The *benefits* derived to us through it. The jews were taught, by their types, the absolute necessity of an atonement; and the blessings to be communicated by it—such as taking away sin; reconciliation, and so on. And, we are taught that all the bestowments of grace, and final glory, are imparted through, or in consequence of, the mediation of Christ. Hence John the baptist says of him, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.' John, i. 29. And Paul declares, 'He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.' Heb. ix. 26. With whom unites the beloved disciple—'Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.' 1 John, iii. 5, 8. A triumvirate, whose testimony cannot be overthrown by any thing you have opposed to it; nor by all the world; without totally annulling the evidence and authority of scripture.

Range the bestowment of covenant love on the vessels of mercy in what order you please, fir; the *cause*, and *medium*, of that bestowment cannot be changed. They were from eternity present, in the view and purpose of the divine mind, as they will be in fact when all is accomplished. The objects of God's choice, who are in time made the subjects of his grace, were from everlasting, in the will and esteem of God in Christ, what they will be in ultimate felicity; because, with him there can be no change. This ensures the completion of the divine purpose in all its parts. Men may disbelieve, and they may oppose: but every step of God's conduct infallibly leads on to the ultimatum of the grand design. The blessings of grace are all as inseparably connected with eventual glory, which is their *end*; as they are with the sovereign will of God, which is their *source*—and they all flow down to sinners through the atonement of Christ. But let us hear the bible.

1. Man, by nature, is *dead* in trespasses and sins—*regenerating*, or quickening grace, is imparted through Christ. 'According to his mercy he saved us by the washing'

'washing of *regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.' Tit. iii. 5. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.' 1 Pet. i. 3. The resurrection of Christ confirms the truth and the acceptance of his vicarious oblation, and secures spiritual life to all his seed.

2. Man, by sin, is *defiled* in all his powers—*sanctification* is wrought through Christ. 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.' 1 John, i. 7. 'Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' Rev. i. 5; 6. 'These are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Ch. vii. 14. In a word, 'Christ is made sanctification to them.' 1 Cor. i. 30.

3. Sin shut up all *access* of the transgressor to a holy and righteous God. This we see realized in Adam's expulsion from the garden of Eden. By Christ there is a new and living way opened even for the chief of sinners to the throne of grace. 'For by him both Jew and Gentile have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' Eph. ii. 18. 'Seeing that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy; and find grace to help in time of need.' Heb. iv. ult. 'Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, &c.' Ch. x. 19, 20.

4. *Painful alienation*, and *miserable apprehensions* of mind, are the unavoidable result of sin—but peace and reconciliation are the fruit of the cross of Christ. 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Rom. v. 1. 'For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.' Ver. 10.

5. *By nature we are children of wrath*—in Christ we are the children and heirs of God. 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.' John, i. 12. 'And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.'

'Christ.' Rom. viii. 17. 'And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Gal. iv. 6. 'The spirit of adoption is not given, you see, that they *may be*, but because *they are*, the children of God. This also flows from the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'

6. *Sin forfeits life*; and all right and title to a re-enjoyment of it. But pardon is given through the atonement of Christ. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.' Eph. i. 7. And be ye kind, one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Ch. iv. 32. 'It is Jesus the Son of God, who delivered his people from the wrath to come.' 1 Thess. i. 10.

7. The sinner, though an *ungodly* creature in himself, and richly deserving eternal ruin; yet, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, he has a full right and title to everlasting life and glory. 'Now to him that worketh is the reward, not reckoned of grace, but of debt.' But to him who worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.' Rom. iv. 4-7. 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' Ch. v. 19. 'For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' Ch. x. 4.

8. Death is an *awful* and *alarming* period to the guilty conscience; but Christ has taken away its sting, and rendered it a desirable and delightful period to his people, by his own death and resurrection for them. 'The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57. 'Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.' Heb. ii. 14, 15. 'The sinner shall *rise* at the last day; but he shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt—whereas, the believer shall be *raised* to honor, and glory, and everlasting joy.' The

hour

hour is coming, when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' John, v. 28, 29. 'And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.' 1 Cor. xv. 49. 'For he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' Phil. iii. 21. This terminates,

10. In the full enjoyment of perfect glory to all his church. 'That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' Rom. v. 21. His children are 'begotten to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.' 1 Pet. i. 3—5. This glorious abode beyond the skies is the object of every real christian's hope according to the scriptures. Yes; the true believer's springs of happiness are all *out of self*, they are *in Christ*; for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and it is out of that fulness his people receive grace for grace in time, and glory in eternity.

This, you perceive, sir, is only a sketch of a large subject; but, in every view of it, the blessings bestowed and the atonement of Christ, are so closely connected that, by denying this, you deny the whole: and, by doing so, you render the evil and desert of sin, with every part of salvation, a mere figure; that is, a mere nothing. This, indeed, seems to be your design; or you would have scarcely said, that, 'In a *figurative* sense, the gospel may be said to be the most expensive provision that God has made for recovering men from the power of sin, in order to purchase them, *as it were*, for himself.' (ib. p. 202.) So that the gospel provision is but *figurative*, and the purchase is only *as it were*—neither of them real and true. According to this remark, sin and grace, holy pleasures and guilty fears, in short, heaven and hell, are mere *figures*! How contrary to the feelings of all the world! But, what is more awful still, if any thing can exceed, is this—upon such an hypothesis, the divine testimony in his word, and the divine cha-

character in his moral government, must be totally given up, not only as unintelligible, but as absolutely having no existence whatever; for, if the provision of the gospel revelation be but a *figure*, every thing connected with it must be the same. Is this the creed of a *rational believer*? 'Let me become a *fool*, that I may be *wise*.' 1 Cor. iii. 18. No man, I should imagine, is capable of forming an idea of a *figurative* foundation and a *real* superstructure reared upon it—or, a *real* foundation supporting a *figurative* building! According to your doctrine, christianity, even in all its glory, is but a metaphor, or figure of speech! It contains nothing to support the hopes of a guilty sinner, or display the glory and grace of God! But, sir, can any man be so bold as to tell us, 'that the proper, the ultimate, and the great end of Christ's death, is not pointed out in the scriptures?' (ib. p. 184, 185.) Can any person have assurance enough even to hint that our 'opinions are contradicted by the whole tenor of revelation, and are extremely injurious to the character of the ever blessed God?' (ib. p. 181.) One can hardly suppose it.—To assert what cannot be proved is always a mark of weakness and temerity. The truth is, in my humble opinion, the passages adduced, and many others of similar import, in their general design, can be construed into no other sense than what we embrace when properly understood; and therefore, to avoid their force, they are all interpreted into a *figurative* meaning; which is, in fact, no meaning at all. If I have here supposed too much, or the idea may be considered as uncandid, I will readily recant on conviction. But,

IV. I come now to consider the doctrine of atonement, in the light of the *divine perfections*. I am aware, sir, that you may ask this question—'Was there no possible way of saving sinners, but by the atonement of Christ?' To which I answer, NONE. Nor am I in the least apprehensive that such a reply, by any means, 'limits the Holy One of Israel.' Besides, I have the authority of a necessarian to support me in saying, 'What is, could not but be as it is'—and this is God's way of saving sinners, as revealed in his word. But, I appeal to the *perfections* of Deity—particularly his holiness, his justice, and his wisdom. These perfections are essential to the divine nature; and cannot be conceived of in any possible detachment from it. By the *first*, he as necessarily hateth sin as he loves himself. By the *second*, he is as naturally bound to punish it as he is to maintain his

own character. And, by the *third*, he has appointed such an *end*, in saving his people (inclusive of the *means*), as shall be most for his glory, when the scene is closed. Had we a receptive capacity and taste equal to such a theme, we should adore the plan and approve the measures adopted to complete it. However, let *us* approve or oppose, his counsels stand and he will do all his pleasure. Give me leave,

I. To make a few remarks on divine *holiness*. On this part of truth I observe a *dead silence* reigns through all your works which I have read. I do not recollect one single sentence about it from first to last. A part of truth which is the beauty and glory of the divine character; and, without which, all the rest would be like the body without the soul. I am, at liberty to say you passed over this excellency of the divine nature intentionally; but, I freely confess, I do not see how you could, with propriety, introduce it, much less enlarge upon it; least of all maintain it. For, if it be possible, as on your hypothesis it certainly is, for the divine nature to be material; for that reason there may be no holiness in God. Holiness is a moral excellency; and therefore can by no means belong to matter. Totally omitting the holiness of *God*, it is the less surprizing to find you so perfectly indifferent to the purity of the *intelligent creation*. What is not in the fountain cannot be expected in the streams. But nothing can be a more flagrant contradiction, surely, than to suppose the possibility of happiness without holiness. It is impossible for God to be either unholy, or without holiness; because he can neither think nor do wrong; and because all his thoughts and ways are according to unerring truth. Perhaps no divine perfection is celebrated with more frequency, or in higher strains of elegance, in the sacred page, than the purity of God—*he is even* 'GLORIOUS in holiness.' It is the glory of his nature; and of all his conduct. In a word, it is the dignity and life of the ever-blessed God. His law is the transcript of his nature. It is only in a cordial regard to this, that we express our approbation of that. Nothing short of loving God's holy law, will testify our love to his holy nature. Sin is an opposition and insult to this infinite excellency. And hence it is said, that, 'the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.' Rom. viii. 7. What adds to this mournful description of fallen man is this—his enmity is voluntary. He chuses to live estranged from this holy God; and

ever would persist in doing so, if left to himself. On this account he is miserable; for nothing but fellowship with a holy God in Christ can be a happiness suited to an intelligent being. God cannot impart this favor at the expense of his purity; and the sinful creature, as such, has no more wish to enjoy it than power to obtain it. For which reason, if the favor be ever conferred, and we know it is, the good pleasure of God must provide the medium, as well as vouchsafe the privilege. It would be completely absurd to suppose that the great God would forget the glory of his own character, because he chose to save a sinful creature. No, sir; that be far from Deity. Besides, were such a salvation possible, it would be merely nominal; for it is *new*, and it will be *for ever*, the felicity of the heavenly inhabitants to celebrate the display of the divine character in all its glory. Look at our *Emmanuel*, and you see this divine perfection illustriously appear in the salvation of a sinner; whereas, upon your principle, it is denied, it is annihilated, altogether. According to your notion, either God must approve of sin, or there can be no sinner; or no sinner can be happy in time or eternity. For, 'without holiness 'no man shall see the Lord.' Heb. xii. 14. Does infinite holiness require a pure and sinless nature? It is in Christ. And perfect obedience? It was performed by him; both in the name, and for the felicity, of his people.

Yes, sir; I know you tell us that God's 'displeasure' against sin is sufficiently shewn by the methods which he 'takes to promote the reformation of sinners, and by the 'punishment of those who continue unreformed.' (ib. p. 277.) But, were I allowed to speak freely, I should say, this assertion plainly shews that you either have not properly considered the subject, or that you do not understand it. And I should say so—1. Because, some will 'continue unreformed' for ever; and they must consequently experience his 'displeasure in punishing' them for ever: but this destroys your scheme of universal restoration.—2. Because, the Lord does not 'take methods' *simply* 'to promote the 'reformation of sinners;' for neither promises nor threatenings, without the power of God exerted to apply them, will prove effectual even for reformation. The same may be said of mercies and judgments. This remark is confirmed daily. And—3. Because, reformation and salvation are so materially distinct, that they ought not in justice to the

rea-

reader and the subject to be confounded. If therefore you, mean only an external change of conduct, you leave the question as it was; and, if you design the salvation of the gospel, you must have recourse to the atonement of Christ. There is no alternative. For, the divine displeasure against sin is so far from being '*sufficiently*' shewn in all the punishment that sinners feel, that the whole dwindles into a point when compared with the cross of Christ. They are all mere creatures reaping the fruits of their own doings; by which we learn indeed the *desert* of sin in measure, but very little of its malignity and horrid *nature*. Whereas, when we see the Son of God incarnate taking away sin by the sacrifice of *himself*, the divine displeasure against it shines out, amidst the awful scene, with a lustre that astonishes and humbles the highest and purest creatures for ever. It were arrogance in the extreme for a creature to decide on a subject between which and his capacity there is no comparison. Elevate yourself to what station you please, below the throne of God—imagine yourself possessed of what mental powers you will, short of the infinite nature of Deity—and you can neither survey the extent, nor estimate the malignity of sin. This is the sole exclusive prerogative of the supreme Legislator, against whom it is committed: and from whose judgment there lies no appeal. I most sincerely wish that your soul and mine, sir, may be more deeply affected with this humbling thought. A humility this that is no impeachment of our good sense, nor reflection on our understanding. The more our thoughts agree with the thoughts of God, the more refined and exalted will be our knowledge of the best things. None but God can estimate sin; and, if we look to the cross of Christ as an atoning sacrifice for it, there we behold it; and no where else but there. 'This is God's testimony concerning it. But this I have mentioned before. (R. p. 47.)

If 'the supreme happiness of his creatures and subjects be 'the sole governing principle' of God's moral government and conduct; (ib. p. 168.) I need no apology for saying, it is not worth his while to live for such 'an end and object;' because, in that case, his happiness must depend on theirs, and be inferior to it. There is a relative inferiority in the means to the end. Whoever, thinks a little must allow, that it is the highest end and object possible of a creature's life, to glorify and enjoy God in Christ—but, can it ever be supposed that his creature's supreme happiness is the sole governing principle of his government and conduct! Impossible to be proved, by whomsoever asserted! Were it possible for God to fail in his

design, or sole governing principle, in one instance, by the same rule he might in another, and another, and so on ; the consequence of which is awfully manifest—he must necessarily be a disappointed being ; because all his creatures have *not* been supremely happy. Had the supreme happiness of his creatures made a part of his plan, that part must have proved abortive ; because sin and misery have already obtained amongst them for near six thousand years ; and so will continue to do, the necessarian being judge, while his throne endures. ‘ Supreme ‘ happiness’ excludes all pain and disorder ; and therefore *all* the intelligent creation were not designed to possess it. No, sir ; on the other hand, the truth is this—whatever be a governing principle in the divine will, his immutable *holiness* is *sure* to realize ; for which reason we clearly see what was *purposed* by what is *performed*. What was the sole governing principle in the eternal mind at first, must of necessity be the same at this moment, and will be so for ever ; because it is impossible for God to change. Creation was not a necessary, but voluntary effort, of the divine will ; and, consequently every event attendant on its existence, must be the same : and therefore the supreme happiness of his creatures did not enter into the scheme ; for, if it had, those in misery might justly charge him with defect in holiness as well as power. The sole governing principle of God, in all his works and ways, ever was, and ever must be, ‘ *his own* GLORY.’ And, if I might distinguish, the *glory* of his HOLINESS. This is displayed, and his design fulfilled, whether some of his creatures are for ever miserable as sinners, or others saved by the atonement of Christ.

II. The *justice* of God also deserves our attention on this subject. Here I shall take the liberty to notice some things you have mentioned, with a view to set the matter in its proper light.

True, sir ; ‘ God is a being purely good,’ as you say ; (ib. p. 277.) because there is nothing bad, either in his will or his ways. To *love*, and to *do* justice, is good—this is the divine character in the highest possible sense—therefore God is good ; purely good. He cannot punish *without* a cause ; nor *beyond* the desert of the crime. But, he is equally bound to be just to himself, to his own government and character, as to his creatures ; and he is so : or he would fail in his goodness, that is, in being just. It is impossible for perfect holiness and a defect of justice to be, for one moment, in the same being. Let me observe—1. That, God is a good lawgiver ; for his ‘ law is holy, just, and good.’—2. That, the sanction
by

by which his law is guarded is good; that is, it is equitable and righteous.—3. That, God is good, or just, in the execution of the threatening in case of disobedience; for, ‘God is ‘righteous who taketh vengeance.’—4. That, God is just, or good, in continuing to express his displeasure against sin, till satisfaction be made for the offence. This cannot be done by the sinner, any more than a man insolvent can discharge a debt of ten thousand pounds; or recover his life from a law that *justly* demands it. The supposition of which is absurd. However, absurd as it might be to suppose that a man could do any thing to *deserve* life, when he is already under a righteous sentence of death; yet, such is your doctrine in conclusion; or we should not be told that repentance and a good life are sufficient of themselves to recommend us to the favor of God. According to your teaching a man may be alive and dead, *in law*, at the same time.

You also tell us that ‘justice in God is only a modification of ‘benevolence—that he simply wishes the happiness of all his ‘creatures—that virtue is a necessary means of that happiness—and that he is incapable of introducing any unnecessary evil.’ (idem.) An insinuation more derogatory to the glory of the Supreme Being, taken all together, I suppose can hardly be expressed! It was said just now that the evil of suffering does not exceed the evil of sin; and therefore no part of suffering can be ‘*unnecessary*,’ nor will be so while sin continues. Suffering is a necessary expression of the demerit of sin from a righteous, offended legislator. To say that God ‘*simply wishes*’ the happiness of all his creatures, is neither proper nor modest; because it supposes what is impossible to be true—namely, a want of power to accomplish his will. And, to say that justice is ‘*only*’ a modification of benevolence, is not much better. Does the Divine Being, sir, *only wish well* to his creatures? Is he not the absolute GIVER of all the good they have? If not, pray who is? And, if he be so, why are justice and benevolence confounded? Is he obliged in justice to his creatures, while they rebel against him, to protect their lives, and feed and clothe them? You will not say, Yes—and, if he be not, why should you call benevolence and justice the same thing? I will not say this language was *designed* to lead the reader’s mind from the proper question; but it may very easily produce that effect. Those who are saved *be saved*, by the riches of his grace; and those who perish, perish as the desert of sin; and God is just in both. It is pity we should venture beyond our depth; because it is a mark of weakness
and

and attended with danger. An instance of it follows. 'Every degree of severity,' you say, 'which does not tend to promote repentance and the practice of virtue, must be inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the moral government of God, and even with justice itself, if it have the same end with divine goodness, the happiness of God's creatures.' (ib. p. 168, 169.) You should have asked yourself the following questions—1. Have I proved that the 'end' of divine justice and goodness is the happiness of God's creatures?—2. Have I proved that any degree of severity, on the sinful creature, has a 'tendency' to promote repentance and the practice of virtue?—3. Have I such a competent knowledge of the fundamental principle of God's moral government as to say, with safety, what is, and what is not, 'inconsistent' with it? These queries are so natural and necessary that they ought by no means to have been omitted; and, had you paused and coolly replied to them, we had never seen the preceding bold assertion. I hope, sir, it is not too late for you to do it yet—be requested to retire and consider it.

It is agreed, that 'the divine justice is not a blind principle;' (ib. p. 168.) for then it could not belong to God: but it is an essential characteristic of the universal Governor, who will admit no sinner whatever to his smiles without *satisfaction* made for the insult sin offers to the majesty of the supreme Legislator. The sinner being already under a righteous sentence of condemnation, it is not in the nature of his repentance and virtue, suppose him a subject of them, to repair the breach and supersede the threatened execution. If therefore this be done at all, it must be done by one who is not a sinner, and in the name, as well as on the account, of him for whom it is done: or it would be done at random, and prove ineffectual. This leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ. In him we see a *just* God freely bestowing all the blessings of grace on them who otherwise deserved to perish for ever. Hence the inspired volume says—'He is a *just* God, and yet a *saviour*.' Isai. xlv. 2. It is only in Christ that '*mercy and truth are met together, that righteousness and peace embrace each other*.' It is entirely on this ground you are told that 'God is *just* in pardoning the sin, and justifying the persons, of them who believe.' Rom. iii. 25, 26. In short, it is this doctrine only that shews us how the law and gospel of God can harmonize in a sinner's salvation. For which reason Paul says, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we *establish the law*.' Ver. 31. This, sir, is 'the principle on which

* which the doctrine of the atonement is founded ;' and, how you must have read the bible to assert that it is not found ' in *all* the books of scripture,' (ib. p. 155.) I will not now pretend to say. I named also,

III. The *wisdom* of God. Here I shall drop but a few words, and hasten to your objections ; and then close my design. Having said somewhat on this article before, (R. p. 49.) I may say the less now. When we take the wisdom of God into the account, it is always safe for us to assert, that every thing is so well ordered that it cannot be improved. ' Manifold ' are the works of Jehovah, in *wisdom* has he made them all.' Ps. civ. 24. But, in a peculiar manner, ' the manifold wisdom ' of God, Eph. iii. 10. appears in the choice and redemption of his church. ' Towards them he has *abounded* in ALL ' *wisdom* and prudence.' Ch. i. 8. The end infinite *wisdom* proposed in the salvation of his people was, ' *the praise of the glory of his grace.*' Ver. 6. Nothing could effectually secure this end, we may confidently conclude, but the means which were adopted. Hence the church is said to be *chosen* in Christ before the foundation of the world—to be *predestinated* to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ—to be *accepted* in the beloved—to have *redemption* and *pardon* through his blood—and so on. See Eph. ch. i. The whole of which is according to the good pleasure of him who *worketh* all things after the counsel of his own will. The famous *Limborch*, who does not appear to have a just idea of the gospel, was so struck with this subject, that I shall give you his thought upon it. He says, ' God was pleased in his infinite *wisdom* to make choice ' of this method in bringing men to salvation, as being the ' *most proper* to advance his glory, and to convert men from ' their sins to holiness of life. For what greater demonstration, ' could there be of God's being a just judge, and of his hatred ' towards sin, than by this severe and bloody sacrifice of his ' Son for sinners ?' Complete System, b. iii. ch. v. sect. 1. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

L E T T E R X X X I I I .

REVEREND SIR,

IN this, and the next letter, I purpose considering your *objections* to the atonement. That there are objections made to this doctrine is by no means surprizing; for nothing hurts the pride of human nature more than being dependent; even for salvation and eternal life. However, it will appear, I presume, that your objections are as groundless in their *evidence*, as they are unreasonable in their *nature*. I am aware they are not proposed in the formal manner of objections—and, no doubt, but you had a reason for introducing them in a different way. But I shall gather them up and bring them forwards to speak for themselves as their author wished they might. For, it is manifest, they could not be mentioned for nothing. And yet it seems a little particular that they should appear so unsupported as they do—unless it was apprehended that the reader would embrace them without examination. But, you know, an implicit follower is no glory to his master.

I. You tell us, that ‘ mankind in general, and especially ‘ the more philosophical part, have stumbled at the doctrine ‘ of a crucified Savior.’ (Disq. v. i. p. 278. Corrup. v. i. p. 20, 21, 187. v. ii. p. 441.) Be it so—yet still, this important truth has never been considered as a *reproach* by those who best understood the ground and design of revealed religion. To assert, therefore, sir, ‘ that christians in general ‘ were sufficiently disposed to adopt any opinions that would ‘ most effectually wipe away *this reproach*’—is to assert that they neither believed the *truth*, nor understood the *end*, of divine revelation; which is rendering their christianity to the last degree suspicious, if not totally denying it. For, how that man can be a christian, in the true sense of the word, who considers the cross of Christ as a ‘ *reproach*,’ I must wait to be informed. You say that Paul, ‘ with true ‘ magnanimity, does not go about to palliate the matter, but ‘ says to the Corinthians (some of the politest people among ‘ the Greeks, and fond of their philosophy,) that he was ‘ determined to know nothing among them but Jesus ‘ Christ,

* Christ and him crucified : for though this circumstance
 * was to the jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks
 * foolishness, it was to others the power of God and the
 * wisdom of God. 1 Cor. i. 23.' That true 'magnanimity'
 which you behold so conspicuous in our great apostle is cha-
 racteristic of every real and zealous friend to revealed
 religion. All are led by one Spirit—all centre in one point—
 all aim at one end. But, have you stated this matter accord-
 ing to the meaning of the apostle ? When he says the cross
 of Christ is a stumbling block to the jews, and foolishness to
 the Greeks, he evidently means to say it was so *only* to those
 among them who did *not believe* the gospel ; because he
 immediately adds, ' but to them who are *called*, both jews
 ' and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom
 ' of God.' By reading your account of the matter, one
 might be led to suppose that the '*others*,' to whom Christ
 crucified was the power of God and the wisdom of God,
 were neither Greeks nor jews, whereas they were both—
 but the truth seems clearly to be this—'*the more philosophical*
 '*part*' rejected the atonement, as they still do, and therefore
 despised the cross of Christ ; while those, and only those, who
 were the *called* of God esteemed and received it. This ap-
 pears to be Paul's true statement of the subject. The called
 of God he not merely *distinguishes* from the worldly wise,
 but sets the two characters in *direct opposition* ; to let us
 know that philosophy, or human wisdom and goodness, can
 have no hand in the salvation of a sinner ; but that the bless-
 ing is, in every view of it, the entire effect and fruit of
 sovereign unmerited favor. One would think it almost im-
 possible to read this chapter, from the verse you cite to the
 close, without being obliged from evidence, and constrained
 from gratitude, to own this—but, so it is—the world by
 ' wisdom knows not God.' Ver. 21. This objection proves it—
 and, yet, without the knowledge of God, we cannot enjoy him.

Paul received his commission, with all its contents, from
 his exalted Master ; and, through all his labors, had a steady
 regard to his honor. His work, however arduous, was
 simple and plain. He had no secrets—no additions to
 make—no superfluities to correct—all was harmony.—
 Though he preached the true humanity of Christ, to prove
 the reality of his death and resurrection ; yet, he also main-
 tained that they ' crucified the Lord of glory.' 1 Cor. ii. 8.
 Nor did Paul, nor any man, ever exalt the character of
 Christ above what they found it, to take away the supposed
 scandal of the cross ; because it exists only in the esteem of

those who reject the gospel. For this reason he says, what demands peculiar attention, 'The preaching of the cross is to them that *perish*, foolishness; but unto us who are *saved*, it is the power of God.' 1 Cor. i. 18. Though the divine and human natures were united in Christ *so* as to constitute the person of our Mediator, and *so* united as to justify a communication of properties, for him to be *properly* called God-man, yet they were not confounded; for each continued to exert its own powers as though the union had not subsisted. Rejecting what we cannot comprehend, and for that reason, is no small proof of the vanity of fallen man. While a sinner remains unconvinced of the utter insufficiency of his own righteousness to save him, he feels no *want*, nor does he believe the *worth*, of the righteousness of Christ: and, as long as this is his case, the cross of Christ will be treated as a stumbling block, and as foolishness.

II. *Infinite satisfaction* also seems an objection with you. I will tell you, sir—we never wish to use words without a meaning; and in order to convey our meaning we must adopt suitable words. However, we are so far from being attached to mere sounds or letters, that the terms *Infinite Satisfaction* shall be given up, if you chuse to supply us with such as would be more acceptable to yourself, and equally expressive of our faith. You know that those who credit the atonement are not the *only* persons who adopt some terms *not found* in scripture; but, seeing it has been often proved that our words convey the *sense* of scripture, we shall beg leave to remain in the use of them till a reason can be offered for laying them aside.

In your esteem 'it is impossible to give a satisfactory account how the sufferings of Christ can be deemed infinite, so as to make atonement for sins of infinite magnitude, when the divine nature of Christ, to which alone infinity belongs, is impassible, and his human nature could bear no more than that of any other man.' (v. i. p. 270, 271.) What may prove 'satisfactory' to one man, you know, sir, may not to another. Some receive the record God has given of his Son; others will not.—That the divine nature of Christ is '*impassible*,' not capable of suffering, is allowed—but no man ought to assert, till he can prove, that his human nature could bear *no more* than that of any other man.—It is a subject of which no creature is a competent judge. *How* this union was formed, and now exists, we enquire not—*how* it became available in the present case,

we

we can safely leave with unerring wisdom—our concern is only with the *fact*. The union itself could not, one would suppose, be more fully expressed than it is in sacred writ; and with that testimony we are satisfied. ‘The only begotten of the Father was made flesh and dwelt among us.’ John, i. 14. ‘God was manifest in the flesh,’ 1 Tim. iii. 16. And so on. The fact being attested by authority from heaven, it is natural to estimate the satisfaction made from the dignity of the only begotten Son of God, who assumed human nature that he might accomplish his engagement. ‘The atonement is inseparably connected with the divinity of Christ:’ (ib. p. 153.) they stand and fall together. But, I think, I will give you my further thoughts on this topic in borrowed language. ‘No man can entertain right ideas of God and his moral perfections, without acknowledging his *infinite amiableness*; none can discern the absolute perfection and infinite loveliness of Deity, without admitting that our obligations to supreme love of his moral character and universal obedience to his will are *infinitely binding*; none can allow that our obligations to perfect love and obedience are infinite, without owning that the violation of such obligations is *infinitely criminal*; no one that looks upon sin as infinitely evil, can hope for pardon without an atonement of *infinite worth*; no one can believe the atonement to be of infinite worth, *who denies the infinite dignity of the Savior*. He, then, that denies the proper divinity of Christ and his infinite dignity, denies the infinite worth of the atonement, the infinite evil of sin, our infinite obligations to obedience, and the infinite loveliness and absolute perfection of God: and, consequently, though he may profess to believe the existence of a being wearing the name, he strips him, in his ideas, of that which constitutes his deity. He that is *without Christ, is therefore without God*. Eph. ii. 12. *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son*. 2 John, 9.’ On this argument, sir, I freely venture the little knowledge given me of the gospel of Christ, in proof of the present point; and therefore beg leave to submit it to your serious and candid reflection.

Nor need the friends of the atonement be ‘embarrassed’ at all with the ‘manhood’ of Christ bearing the wrath of

God; nor the 'temporary' nature of his sufferings. (ib. p. 208.) For, a mediator, furnished as our Emmanuel was, could make, and has made, 'a sufficient atonement for the sins of 'the elect;' because of the dignity of his person—whereas, according to your idea of him, not one sinner can be saved by him, nor ever will; notwithstanding the scripture most expressly says, 'there is salvation in no other.' Acts, iv. 12. As to his sufferings being 'temporary,' or of short duration, I should think this matter might be easily settled, were we open to the plain reasoning of common sense. For instance—when a man has forfeited his life to a just human law, he is, in the eye of that law, dead, eternally dead; that is, he cannot, according to that law, be entitled to any further enjoyment of what he has forfeited; but the reverse. Yet still, were it right to admit a substitute to suffer death for him, his life would be legally continued; but not else. Now, in the present question, this is the case. Though the sinner by transgression forfeits life, and lays himself open to the tokens of righteous displeasure for ever; yet, as the Savior became his substitute and endured what he deserved, in the *nature* though not the *duration* of it, therefore the sinner lives; and his life is guarded by the same law which might otherwise have taken it away. Through this intervention the sentence passed upon him is legally superseded. This shews us that, though the Savior's sufferings were but temporary, yet, they were fully adequate to the sinner's salvation: because they were a proper satisfaction to law and justice given in his nature and name.

III. The *freeness* of salvation seems another of your objections. On this part of the question you tell us there are 'numerous plain and striking texts which uniformly represent God as our universal parent, pardoning sinners 'freely, that is, from his natural goodness and mercy, 'whenever they truly repent and reform their lives.' (ib. p. 156.) When you write again, sir, I should be obliged to you to shew me *some* of these 'numerous' texts; because, as yet, I know not where to find them. But, suppose sinners should *never* 'repent and reform their lives?' What then? And your scheme makes no certain provision for their doing so—but the contrary—whereas, the atonement of Christ, secures their repentance unto life, as well as the pardon of all their crimes. This would have been a good place to have given us your ideas of the divine holiness
im

in harmony with goodness and mercy ; but you are silent.— However, it must not be forgotten that God is as *naturally* righteous and pure, as he is merciful and good—nor is it doing the subject justice to conceal this idea from the reader's view. If sinners repent and reform their lives, then, you say, they are pardoned *'freely.'* How can this be, sir? Do you not mean that the blessing of pardon is procured, or deserved, by their repentance and reformation? If this be the case, no man on earth can prove that pardon is *free*—because it is suspended on this condition; and, the condition being performed, pardon is not a *free* favor but *just* debt, and cannot be legally withheld. A sentiment as dangerous to the souls of men, as it is absurd in point of argument. And a sentiment more contradictory to the gospel of Christ cannot be penned. 'In the new testament we are said to be *'justified freely by the grace of God.* Rom. iii. 24. Tit. iii. 7. 'Now, certainly,' you say, 'if the favor had been procured by another person, it could not have been said to be bestowed freely.' (ib. p. 137.) With submission, sir, let me ask a question—Is not the favor bestowed as *'freely'* when procured by *another* person for me, as when procured by *myself*? The answer is easy—there can be no difference. But, the truth is, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and all the blessings of grace and glory with him, are the *gifts* of eternal love and undeserved favor. And, what is *given* must be *free*; or it is not a *gift*. There is no condition for the creature to perform, either directly or indirectly, to procure the blessings of salvation; for, were it so, we could not be *justified freely by the grace of God.* Grace and works are as perfectly opposite as a *gift* and a *debt*; which is level to the meanest understanding. Paul's testimony here is quite in point. 'Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant, according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work,' Rom. xi. 5, 6. Let this evidence be duly regarded, sir. I think the most learned in the law when pleading a cause at the bar, or the most skillful attorney in drawing a conveyance, cannot be more cautious in the choice of terms, nor yet more expressive; than the Spirit of inspiration has been on this subject. *Freely*, that is, without cause, or worthiness, or deserving, in the receiver. The whole force of the word seems exerted to prove, through all the bible, that the sub-

subject of which it is used is, in a certain sense, *passive*; that is, there is *in him* no cause of what is done to, or bestowed upon him. David in prophecy, Ps. lxi. 4. speaking of Christ's enemies, said they *hated him without cause*; that is, freely (בְּרֵיָא , by the Seventy translated, $\delta\omega\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\nu$). This passage our Lord applies to himself in John, xv. 25. and says, 'They hated me *without a cause*' ($\delta\omega\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\nu$). So here. We are justified *freely* by the grace of God ($\delta\omega\epsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\nu$); that is, without a cause in us. It is by the grace of God, his free favor, and not our goodness.

'In one passage, indeed,' you say, 'according to our translation, God is said to forgive sin *for the sake of Christ*, Eph. iv. 32. Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, has freely forgiven you. But,' you add, 'in the original it is in Christ, and may be understood of the gospel of Christ.' If we are pardoned *for Christ's sake*, and yet *freely*, as you cite this text, I should be glad to be informed, when you are disposed, *how* our repentance and reformation can have any influence in the business.—Do be so kind as to explain yourself. Here let me observe, sir, that whatever God may be said to do in or by the gospel of Christ, was done before in Christ whose gospel it is: and hence Paul says, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.' 2 Cor. v. 19. There never was a period in which God did not approve of his people in Christ—and, therefore, when the apostle says that 'God in Christ has freely forgiven' his people, he only relates the actual bestowment of the blessing in time, which had been treasured up for them *in Christ* from everlasting, to be imparted in virtue of his incarnation and sacrifice. For which reason your critical remark might very well have been spared; unless you design to illustrate and confirm the truth you oppose. But you immediately subjoin these words—'Had sin been forgiven, in a strict and proper sense, for the sake of Christ, the word *Freely* would hardly have been annexed to it; for this implies that forgiveness is the free gift of God, and proceeds from his essential goodness and mercy, without regard to any foreign consideration whatever.' (ib. p. 206.) I am not a little pleased, sir, to find you, at last, so very express on such an important theme! A theme, the wonder of angels, and the joy of sinners, for ever. This concession, however, overthrows, at once, and for

for ever, all you have said about the recommending nature, and conditionality, of good works. We both cordially agree to say that, 'forgiveness is the free gift of God.'—Let us stand here, and we shall be on firm ground! Let us always seriously regard this truth, and opposition shall rage in vain. Yes, sir; this is the sensible sinner's strong refuge; hither he flees, and is safe from deserved judgment. The Lord will have mercy, *because* he will have mercy; 'without regard to any foreign consideration.'—This is all his hope and all his salvation. May it be always yours and mine. The sovereign will of God is the *only* reason for his pardoning sinners; therefore the repentance and reformation of men cannot be pleaded as a condition, nor have the least possible influence into the bestowment of the blessing; because this would be a '*foreign* consideration.' You say that 'God forgiveth sin from his *essential* mercy and goodness.'—I hope, sir, that you do not mean by this language that he pardons by *necessity* of nature—because, if so, then, either—1. There could have been no pain or misery in the universe; for the sins of angels and men must have been forgiven immediately on being committed: or—2. The being of sin, and the pardon of it, must have been as necessary and eternal as his existence; which is tantamount to saying there is no sin in the universe: or—3. We must be led to conclude, either that there is no lawgiver, or his law has been perfectly regarded by all intelligent creatures. But you remove all those insuperable difficulties by saying, that, 'forgiveness is the *free gift* of God;' and I am satisfied. For, what is a free gift, cannot be necessary or *essential* to the giver, but must, if bestowed at all, be a free favor to him who receives it, and be a voluntary act in him who imparts it. It may, or it may not, be imparted, as the giver chuses. If the favor be free to him on whom it is bestowed, it is given without any valuable consideration to be rendered by the receiver; and as a matter of mere bounty and choice in the giver. This is true gospel, sir; let us always regard it. Forgiveness is free in the *origin* of it—that is, God pardons the sinner without any consideration *foreign* to his own will and pleasure. 'I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' Isai. xliii. 25. The glory of God being to be displayed in the redemption and final felicity of his chosen ones, an equal regard is had to holiness and justice as mercy—nor could it be otherwise—for the attributes of Deity cannot be divided.

divided, or oppose each other, in a sinner's salvation. Here infinite wisdom shines in the constitution and appointment, in the obedience and sufferings, of our adorable Mediator. He was *freely* set up as the head of his church—he *freely* undertook their cause—and, they are *freely* justified and saved in and by him. That is, they never did, nor ever can, *contribute* any thing towards their own salvation, or in any possible sense *deserve* it. And, as it is *in him* that they are pardoned, justified, and saved; the blessings are truly said to be bestowed *for his sake*. It seems to me, sir, pretty evident, that, some how or other, you misunderstand the business—I mean when you speak of *mercy being essential to God*—because, you know, were this true, then a 'sinful and miserable creature must be essential to the existence of Deity. Nor is this a play upon words—for, what is *essential* to any being, cannot be separated from that being—and, all the world knows that *misery* only is the object of *mercy*, and that *sin* only is the cause of *misery*. But, as sin is the violation of a law by a rational creature; and, as that violation is an insult offered to the majesty and authority of the lawgiver; no man will assert, surely, who understands the question, that mercy shewn to the offender is *essential* to the lawgiver! Either essential to his *nature*, or to his *relation* to the sinning creature! The idea is so absurd that no man can soberly suppose it possible! It must be an act of his own will and pleasure. And then, of course, it may be manifested in any way he thinks proper, that is consistent with the dignity of his character. This still leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ, 'in whom we have redemption through his blood, *the forgiveness of sins*, according to *the riches of his grace*.' Eph. i. 7. By which we learn that, though Christ shed his blood for our sins, as an atoning sacrifice, yet the blessing of forgiveness to us is *free*; being bestowed *according to the riches of his grace*. Suffer me, sir, to defer the consideration of your other objections to the next letter. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIV.

LETTER XXXIV.

REVEREND SIR,

YOU know it is much easier to *make* objections than it is to *support* them. When we throw out a hint which we would have considered as an objection by an opponent, though not expressed in that form, we thereby excuse ourselves from a proper defence, and yet hear what may be said upon it. It is also a much less difficulty to *answer* an objection, than it is to *convince* the objector; for some men are as unwilling to *see* the fallacy of their arguments, as they are unable to *defend* them. Where there is not a cordial regard to revelation we generally find both these—but I write to a professed friend and defender of christianity.—However, no doubt but you have seen this remark so often realized, that the naming it needs no apology. Here let me mention what I call your

IV. Objection to the atonement. With a positive air, and without the shadow of proof, you assert that, 'the death of Christ cannot be considered as a proper sacrifice for sin, because many things essential to such a sacrifice were wanting in it, especially its not being provided and presented by the sinner.' (ib. p. 187.) Had you condescended, sir, to have named the '*many things essential*' to such a sacrifice, and have shewn the reader that they were *not* found in Christ; then you would have appeared like an impartial and sober disputant—but, here you chuse silence—and, I suppose, can give the public a reason for it. The '*essentials* to a proper sacrifice for sin,' in my poor opinion, are these—1. The sacrifice must be a *substitute* for the sinner.—2. It must be *adequate* to such a design.—3. The sacrifice, and the sinner, must be of *one nature*.—And, 4. The sacrifice must be *accepted*, as such, by the great Lawgiver. Were these things are found there is a '*proper* sacrifice for sin'—but, according to the evidence adduced in these letters, they are all found in Christ, and not another—therefore Christ is a proper sacrifice for sin. The sinner's not '*providing* and '*presenting*' the sacrifice cannot, in the least, affect the *essence* or the *acceptance* of it; for these reasons—1. The sinner is not a competent judge of the malignity and demerit of sin. None but God is so. For which reason the

1

sinner

sinner cannot provide that of which he has not a proper knowledge. If, therefore, a sacrifice be provided at all, it must be done by the Legislator ; for an inadequate sacrifice would be of no avail.—2. The offended Lawgiver never required the sinner to provide a sacrifice ; nor reproved him for not doing it. The legal covenant, or covenant of works, knows nothing of it—that commands perfect personal obedience, or threatens death in case of failure ; and there it ends. But the covenant of grace leads to Christ—and there is not a third covenant to guide our enquiry. Nor—3. Did ever any sinner, of his own accord, wish to enjoy the blessing of reconciliation. Universal experience confirms this remark. On which accounts the sinner's ‘ *providing* ’ the sacrifice is absolutely foreign to the subject. And, his ‘ *presenting* ’ it, is of no more importance. For, even under the former dispensation, the people dare not *present*, nor the priest offer, any sacrifice, at least with expectation of acceptance, but such as Jehovah had previously described to them, and provided for them—to that even the types were not of human invention ; much less the substance. It is a token of astonishing grace that the offended Lawgiver condescended to *provide* a suitable sacrifice for sin ; even his own incarnate Son—and that the sacrifice, thus provided, freely ‘ *presented* ’ and offered *himself*, to bear and take away the sins of his people ! Had the *provision* and *presentation* of a sacrifice for sin, corresponding to the divine character, been left to the sinner ; not one of Adam's posterity would have ever seen the face of God with pleasure. Now I come to the consideration of the

V. Objection: namely, ‘ transferring of guilt, and consequently of punishment ; ’ as you express it. (ib. p. 276.) Inflicting, or enduring punishment, always supposes the person who suffers, to be chargeable with the crime for which he suffers ; either by *personal* conduct, or by *imputation*—or the suffering would be unjust. Though this be the hinge on which all our present argument turns, and which you ought deliberately to have considered ; yet you chuse to pass it over with just naming the above words in a parenthesis—as though that was a conclusive argument on your side. Is this treating the subject, sir, as it deserves ? Let the reader judge. If a man read his bible with the least attention, one would suppose he must see, not only the *doctrine*, but the *language* of imputation ; both of sin and of righteousness. And, as it makes such a capital figure in the salvation of God, it is neither generous nor just to treat it in such a superficial manner. I am quite of
your

your mind, that, 'Arguments drawn from the moral government of God, the nature of things, and the general plan of revelation, will not be put off to a future time.' At least they *ought not*; and, I shall be pleased, if they *are not*. 'The whole compass and force of them,' you say, 'is within our present reach, and if the mind be unbiassed, they must, I think, determine our assent.' (ib. p. 278, 279.) I think so too, sir. And, were the mind 'unbiassed,' the evidence afforded in these letters, containing these 'arguments,' would determine our assent. I should suppose, to the record God has given of his Son. No person, perhaps, thinks his mind less biassed, than whose mind is most enslaved. This but too plainly accounts for the rooted and bold opposition to revealed religion which now obtains in the world; and shews us how to reconcile a man's integrity with his holding the most malignant errors. For, one would not willingly imagine, that any man can oppose the truth, either of doctrine or duty, with knowledge and design.

The truth of a *transfer* or *imputation*, cannot be more fully taught us than in the sacred page. How came *death* into the world? By *sin*. But how came *infants* to die, who have not personally violated the law of God? By the *imputation* of Adam's first sin to them; they being federally in him, and represented by him, in that action. Thus expressly the apostle reasons on this point. 'Wherefore, as by *one* man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that (or in whom) *all have sinned*. For until the law sin was in the world: but *sin* is not *imputed* when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.' Rom. v. 12—14. This teaches us, very clearly, that if infants had not been considered in Adam as a part of a legal, federal, or moral whole, no sin could have been imputed to them; and yet, without the imputation of sin, there is no reason of their death: because, 'death is the wages of sin.' Ch. vi. 21. It is in this view only, I apprehend, that Adam is the figure or type of Christ, who was then to come: each federally representing his respective seed, of which he was the constituted and appointed covenant head. To an 'unbiassed mind' nothing can be superior evidence to the apostle's reasoning on the subject in this chapter. See ver. 19. 'For as by one man's disobedience many were *made sinners*; so by the obedience of one shall many be *made righteous*.' It

is only with this doctrine in our eye that we can form any possible idea of those texts which declare—that ‘ the Lord hath laid on him the *iniquity* of us all—he was *made sin* for us—he bore their *sins* in his own body on the tree—the man is blessed to whom the Lord will *not impute sin*—God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*—in Christ, the Lord, all the seed of Israel are *justified*—he is the Lord our *righteousness*—God *imputeth righteousness* to his people without works—Christ of God is *made righteousness* to his church, and they are the righteousness of God *in him*. These, and various other parts of God’s word, are completely unintelligible, if we lay aside the doctrine of *imputation*; whereas, with this key, we unlock a cabinet of the richest jewels, and come at the knowledge of the greatest blessings; nothing less than the everlasting love of God to his people in Christ, their union to him, and salvation by him.

You know, sir, the bible tells us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the husband and head of his church; which is the fulness of him who filleth all in all. This being the case, their interest is one—their sins he took on him, and put his righteousness on them; and their salvation becomes his glory and joy. It is for this reason that Paul and Jude express themselves in the following manner—‘Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to *himself* a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.’ Eph. v. 25–27. ‘Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of *his glory* with exceeding joy, *to the only wise God our Savior*, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.’ Jude, ver. ult. This union, or relation, did not commence, though it is manifested, in time; for every step of divine conduct in time is but an exemplification of what eternally dwelt in the gracious purpose of God towards his people. And he ‘calls things which are not, as though they were.’ Rom. iv. 17. ‘It is] this doctrine, sir, and only this, which will prove an exposition to those passages in which you read, that, ‘He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.’ Num. xxiii. 21. ‘The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.’

Jerem.

Jerem. i. 20. And the apostle says that, ' God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, ' in Christ Jesus.' Eph. ii. 6. ' And ye are complete in him, ' who is the head of all principality and power.' Col. ii. 10. Now, it is manifest, that the children of God are no more without sin, *in themselves*, than Christ is without righteousness; but, *in him*, they are accepted even in the eyes of infinite purity. All their comeliness arises from *his* comeliness *put upon them*; Ezek. xvi. 14. and all his sufferings arose from *their* sins being *put upon him*. You would do well to recollect, sir, that all the redeemed of the Lord were chosen in Christ *before* the foundation of the world; Eph. i. 4. that they had *grace* given them in Christ *before* the world began; 2 Tim. i. 9. and, that the promise of *eternal life* was given them in Christ, by God who cannot lie, *before* the world began; Tit. i. 2. so that the bestowment of grace and glory *upon them*, and all the obedience and sufferings of Christ *for them*, are only the fulfilment of the original agreement between the sacred Three in their behalf. For which reason it seems quite safe to conclude there was, in this sense, an eternal union between the Lord Christ and all his seed. This appears to be the scripture doctrine, sir; which I wish you clearly to understand, and cordially to receive: nor can any one desire, I should suppose, plainer evidence of any truth, when properly understood, than the bible affords of this. And, if scripture evidence be rejected, or slighted, we have nothing left.

VI. The last objection I shall mention is, what you are pleased to say of the *practical tendency* of the atonement. No doubt but the *morality* of a doctrine will give us some estimate of its truth, when duly stated—but, if I am not much deceived, you have quite mistaken the matter in your statement of it. Your objection is couched in these words—' If the sufferings, due for sin, ' had been endured already by ' some person of sufficient dignity, on the behalf of all future ' transgressors, ' then, you tell us, ' it is impossible to conceive how the consideration of it should be any restraint at ' all; since nothing that any man could then do would expose any other to farther suffering.' (ib. p. 170, 171.) This assertion, I think, betrays a very great inattention, to say the least, to the following two things—1. To the statement of this matter in the word of God. Were you to read the sacred page, you could not well help seeing the difference that is there made between judicial punishment and fatherly

cor-

correction. Though a believer shall never come into condemnation, yet his sins are sure to be visited with the rod of a covenant Father. Far, notwithstanding he is delivered from the law as a covenant of works, yet he is still under it as a rule of life. It must have been a peculiar oversight indeed not to have seen this distinction. The Father, when speaking of the Son as mediator, says, 'If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.' Ps. lxxxix. 30—33. And great Paul says, that 'we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.' 1 Cor. ix. 21. But—2. Your declaration discovers, if possible, a greater inattention to the workings of human nature than to the word of truth. Was it ever known, since the foundation of the world, that FEAR was a nobler and stronger motive to obedience than *gratitude* and LOVE? Let an instance be produced. And yet your language supposes this. According to your argument, the more men *fear*, or *felt*, the righteous displeasure of a sin-engaging God, the more they would refrain from sin, and the better they would serve him! What a strange idea! Upon this plan of reasoning, there must be more reverence and homage rendered to God in *hell*, where men have no higher motive than *fear*; than in the *celestial world*, where they are governed by ardent *gratitude*, and superlative *love*! Can any man receive this doctrine? One should hardly suppose it!

How amazingly different your idea of this subject from that of the inspired volume.—'Bless the Lord; O my soul!' says David, 'and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities,' and soon. Ps. ciii. 1—3. 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.' Ps. xlv. 22, 23. 'For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for

' for them, and rose again.' 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. ' We love him, because he first loved us.' 1 John, iv. 19. ' Unto him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' Rev. i. 5, 6. Does this evidence go to prove that the atonement of Christ is of a *licentious tendency*? Can any thing more strongly mark the opposite temper and conduct? These animated strains arise, you perceive, sir, not from the fear of God as a righteously incensed Judge, but from the overflowing streams of his pardoning, saving grace and love displayed through the sacrifice of his own Son. May you and I be exalted to this honor, and this felicity, through the cross of Christ. Amen.

This imperfect view of the subject, will let the reader see, who chuses to judge for himself, whether the doctrine of the atonement is, as you say, ' quite a modern thing,' (ib. v. II. p. 477.) or, whether it be not as old as revealed religion; or, rather, as ancient, in the will and purpose of God, as the salvation of his people. I believe it will be found impossible to separate the one from the other. I shall close this letter with one observation. It appears, I think, in the foregoing letters, that there is precisely the same authority, or evidence, for the atonement of Christ, as for the resurrection and future judgment. If, therefore, you would be properly a *rational* believer, that is, have sufficient ground for your faith—if you would be a *consistent* believer, that is, receive every part of truth that is founded on the same authority or evidence; you ought to embrace the atonement with the same affection as the resurrection and final judgment. It is the characteristic of a protestant, and friend to revealed religion, to consider and treat the bible as a *perfect* book. Perfect in its *authority*, and perfect in its *revelation*; that is, it admits neither of addition nor diminution. Now, you know, sir, to expunge, or discredit, either of its doctrines or duties, is as *really* a practical denial of its perfection, as to charge it with defect. The perfection, or sufficiency, of scripture, as truly excludes the idea of superfluity, as it does of deficiency. Your rejection of the atonement, therefore, in point of sense and truth, leaves the bible in exactly the same state, as a denial of the resurrection would do: for which reason suffer me to request you, sir, deliberately to review your scheme, and be consistent with yourself and the word of God. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

REVEREND SIR,

LETTER XXV

For

For wrath is punishment; and punishment always implies offence. God is just; and therefore cannot punish without a crime. No, sir; sinners are not condemned *because* they were not chosen to salvation—nor *because* Christ did not make atonement for them—but, the plain and only reason is, *because* of sin committed against a holy and righteous God. Had the contrary been the case you might have had somewhat to say; but, as the matter really is, predestination is absolutely free from every fair and just objection. There is a term you seem fond of using, about which I need a little instruction. I mean the term 'Severity.' Would you have me understand punishment *justly* or *unjustly* inflicted, by its first? If the *latter*, you will permit me to deny the existence of any such thing; because it is impossible for 'the all-perfect government of God' to be stained with injustice. And, if the *former* be designed, it is merely an expletive and stands for nothing; because, in that case, severity only signifies *just* punishment. For this reason I shall say no more upon it till I am better acquainted with your meaning in it. If you will allow me to speak freely, I would observe that, I am clearly of opinion that 'the greatest part of mankind,' but not all of them, will be eventually glorified; and that amongst them will be found those who had been, *literally*, the chief of sinners. The ground of my opinion is Paul's testimony concerning his glorious Master, where he says, 'That in all things he might have the pre-eminence.' Col. i. 18. I most sincerely wish, sir, that you and I had a brighter and better idea of this beautiful passage of scripture: it would enlarge our views, and warm our hearts, in defending the gospel of salvation. To answer you tell us that 'the advocates for the Calvinistic doctrine consist chiefly of persons of little learning or education' (ib. p. 226.) Suppose the Calvinists, in general, may not have had a liberal education, yet they have been enabled to plead their adorable Master's cause at least with the silence; if not the conviction, of their opponents—and, very probably may again. For, even to this day, they are not all quite strangers to language, nor common sense. And they attend one grain of common sense, superior to all the learning in the universe which is not subject to the control of common sense. But, let it be even as you say—what then? Would you form an estimate, sir, of the *truth* of any doctrine by the quantity of erudition discovered in its advocates? It cannot be—for all the world knows that truth

is totally independent of human wisdom. You have not forgotten the candor of those who, in the plenitude of their diffident meekness, accounted Peter and John '*unlearned idiots*!' Acts, iv. 13. Doubtless you can recollect the old question—'Have any of the RULERS, or of the *pharisees*, believed on him?' John, vii. 48. What a mighty evidence those gentlemen, famous for learning and piety, gave of their loving and embracing the truth! Who would not copy an example so remarkably praise-worthy! To be sure their zeal and education must stand as the *criterion* of truth!—You know that some of old were *offended* at the teaching and doctrine of Christ himself, because he was, in their opinion, uneducated and unlearned. I have often observed such *little, foreign* things as these thrown out to amuse the reader by those who undervalued the word of God; and, therefore, sir, I would not have you found in such company: for they betray a meanness of disposition, by such conduct, that is almost beneath one's notice. If you offer nothing to the public but what is manly and truly rational, you need not fear: it will speak for itself; it will be heard and regarded. I have not the least partiality for implicit faith; and therefore always rejoice in the spread of every kind of useful knowledge; but when the doctrines of the gospel come in question, and the authority of God by which they are recommended to us, I freely own to you that I prefer Cobler *Hew's* sermon on '*The Spirit's teaching*,' to all the erudition in the world.

You must allow me deeply to blush for an author who calls himself a *defender* of christianity, and yet can rank the worship of the Son of God with that of 'dead men;' and tell the world that 'the idolatry of the christian church began with the deification and proper worship of Jesus Christ.' (Dis. v. l. p. 51, 52. Corrup. v. l. p. 328.) You remember, sir, to have read that, 'Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil about the body of Moses, durst not bring a railing accusation against him, but said, *The Lord rebuke thee*.' Jude, ver. 9. In the present day of candor and freedom, it would be deemed exceedingly unpolite and severe to charge this sentiment with blasphemy—but, sir, you will permit me to observe, that, this same Jesus, when he is seated on his throne of judgment, will display his infinite majesty in a manner that will fill your astonished mind with everlasting confusion for such an assertion, unless the Lord is pleased to grant you repentance
unto

unto life before you go hence. It will be in vain to think of retracting errors then. (R. p. 60.) Had there been a divine warrant for the worship of dead men, in the sacred page, or any thing bordering upon it—had we been told there that the worship of Jesus Christ was idolatry, or the least hint given by which we might have been led to such a supposition—I would willingly have accepted some apology for your bold, unprecedented assertion; but, seeing every thing is most expressly the reverse of this, I am obliged to observe, in your own words, ‘To such WRETCHED exponents’ are such men reduced, who espouse a system that is opposite to the truth of God. (ib. p. 113.) ‘Who is a liar,’ said the beloved disciple, ‘but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.’ 1 John, ii. 21. This solemn assertion is addressed to your serious regard. (R. p. 31. note.)

As to the Holy Spirit of God, him you are pleased to deny; both as to his person and operations. But, if he withdraw from our religious assemblies, all is dark, and dull, and void. This is confirmed by universal observation. In order therefore to keep up the attention of the people, one substitutes the ornaments of dress and painted figures—another the charms of music—and a third attempts to supply the mournful defect by adopting a system that is suited to depraved nature.—However, all these succedanea will leave the *heart* of the worshipper as senseless towards God as the coldest marble. This is so demonstrable a fact that nothing can make it plainer. May the Spirit of grace and truth re-visit our congregations, or vital religion will never be known to eternity. It is true, we hear of the *common influence* of the Spirit, from some pulpits, and some pens—but it is language I do not understand; for, to me, it conveys no meaning at all. Nor do I see any good arise from it—nor is it founded on the word of God.—The Holy Spirit was promised, by the great Redeemer, to convince of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come—to glorify Christ—to comfort his people—and, we know he graciously performs all these things; and, ‘if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’ Rom. viii. 9. But, yet, this is not *common*; that is, he does not bestow these favors on *all*: they are given only to the children of God. This is sufficient to prove the truth and glory of his divine *person*, and to shew the necessity and importance of his gracious work. But I have spoken to this before. (R. p. 51.)

I know, sir, that you can say some *hard things* respecting the doctrine of the trinity. A doctrine, without which, revealed religion can have no meaning. But, less harshness would be as great a proof of sound wisdom. For, what does a man say, when he decides on a subject of which he can have no possible idea? The answer is easy. Not you, nor the highest creature, can have such a conception of the divine nature, as to say *how* Jehovah exists—and yet, I am very sure that, knowledge less than this, will not entitle any man to call the trinity ‘christian polytheism.’—If there be such arguments as will justify our denying the trinity, they will also justify our denial of the existence of Deity; and prove us innocent in absolute atheism. It seems strange, to me, that the resurrection should be received and the trinity rejected; because the one is no more an object of comprehension than the other; and, because the latter stands on just the same evidence and authority as the former: they are both revealed simply as *facts*, and that is all the bible says about them, and all that we can possibly know of them. At least in the present state of things. Whether receiving one part of revealed truth and rejecting another, is not to be wise above what is written; I must leave you to say.

You say, ‘It is my firm persuasion, that the three doctrines of materialism, of that which is commonly called ‘focinianism, and of philosophical necessity, are equally parts of one system, being equally founded on just observations of nature, and fair deductions from the scriptures.’ (Dis. v. i. p. ult.) That these things are equally parts of *your system* is manifest enough; but, I think, the reader will see reason to conclude, in the preceding letters, that they make *no part of the system of truth*. That system which subverts the morality of human actions, and is destructive of God’s moral government—that system which supposes the happiness of sinners without a due regard to the divine character; can neither be ‘founded on *just* observations of ‘nature,’ nor ‘fair deductions from scripture:’ and, consequently, cannot be a system of truth. Such, sir, is your system. How ‘firm’ your ‘persuasion’ may be in your own mind, I am not to say; but I have endeavoured to prove that it is, in fact, a *groundless* persuasion: of which the reader is to judge for himself. However, after all, should you be determined to abide by your system, I can only *pray* that you may be interested in that atonement which you now deny; and be made a subject of that *grace* of which, at present,

you

you seem to have no knowledge. And, this I shall continue to do, I trust, while we both abide on earth; and wait the decision of that day, when nothing shall meet the plaudit of the Judge but his own WORD and his own WORK.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your Friend and Humble Servant,

S. ROWLES.

POSTSCRIPT.

YOUR five volumes which, I have taken the liberty to examine being borrowed, and my making extracts from them, may possibly have occasioned some errors in quotation—but, sir, if any such instance be found, if I have omitted any argument which may appear to you particularly deserving notice, if I have misrepresented your meaning in any case, if I have expressed myself improperly, or perverted the genuine sense of scripture; I will readily thank you, or any one, who will be so kind as to point it out and set me right, and freely ask your pardon on conviction: for I am persuaded that truth needs no subterfuge nor artifice, being always equal to the severest examination. The more it is examined, and the better it is understood; the more cordially it is embraced, and the more highly it is esteemed. May we know the truth, and the truth shall make us free.

It may be you will never see these letters—but, if you should, and think it prudent to venture into the field again, you will pardon me, sir, if I presume on giving you a word of advice. It is this—do not place your army about in single men, or small parties, as though you feared success, as you have hitherto done; but let me invite you to raise your batteries and range your men for a regular attack, like a general that can trust his strength; and then we shall see, at once, the force that is brought against us, without running here and there to find them out. If *the cause of truth* be the object, let the reader see, at one view, on which side it lies. The whole business in debate may be reduced, in my humble opinion, to these three plain questions.

I. Whether there be a first cause of all things?

II. Whether the bible be the word of God? And,

III. Whether all the truths it reveals are to be received on the credit of divine testimony?

All

All that is written on the subject of christianity apart from, or in opposition to, these three obvious positions, is only holding a false mirror before the eyes of the reader—and you may continue writing till your hand grows stiff with death, without saying any thing to the purpose, except your attention be fixed on these grand and leading points. If you are disposed to take up the matter on this fair and open ground, and keep to the argument, any one may give you a friendly meeting, in divine strength; and go with you all through the argument. I make this observation, because I consider these three thoughts of the greatest importance in the present concern; and, because I do not know that any one has taken up the argument in this light; which appears to me the only just one to bring the business to a proper issue.

One word, and I have done. A certain gentleman, in reviewing my *Remarks*, (Crit. Rev. July, 1784.) was pleased to say that, ‘in the plenitude of my orthodoxy I frequently used such arguments as a cautious and prudent polemic would not chuse to advance.’ Now, had I been indulged with a hint to shew me the *incaution* and *imprudence* of the arguments advanced, I should most certainly have acknowledged the favor; because, though I am not ashamed of my *orthodoxy*, yet, I should not chuse to be *obstinate*. But, as this kindness was then withheld, I shall rejoice if this further attempt may prove the occasion of my better instruction; either from that gentleman, or any other.

F I N I S.



ERRATA.

Page 6, line 27, read *inconsistent*. P. 16, l. 31, dele *nor* ; l. ult. for *on* read *in*. P. 19, l. 25, read *ecclesiastical*. P. 22, l. 40, read *Rom. iii. 23*. P. 23, l. 23, for *to* read *so*. P. 25, l. 6, after *test*, put a comma. P. 30, l. 40, read *sufferings*. P. 37, l. 27, for *spiritual* read *scriptural*. P. 38, l. 23, for *it* read *is*. P. 42, l. 1, for *is* read *his*. P. 50, l. 40, read *extraordinary*. P. 58, l. 25, read *despair*. P. 63, l. 22, read *all long-suffering*. P. 64, l. 21, read *decided*. P. 65, l. 20, for *the* read *his*. P. 66, l. 11, for *where* read *were*. P. 72, l. 6, read *capable*. P. 80, l. penult. read *of attraction*. P. 112, l. 18, read *Letter XX*. P. 154, l. 39, read *Nothing short of this*. P. 157, l. 23, after *beneath*, add, *the weight* ; l. 35, for *more* read *mere*. P. 159, l. 3, for *nor* read *not*. P. 175, l. 24, after *condemn*, add, *another*. P. 190, l. 32, for *be* read *be*. P. 201, l. 3, read *things* ; l. 4, dele *s* in *ceres*. P. 206, l. 18, dele *s* in *sacrifices*. P. 227, l. 39, read *blood of atonement*. P. 241, l. 14, read *I am not at liberty*.

